

COMPLETE NOVEL by RALPH HENRY BARBOUR
JANUARY

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THE SMART SET

A
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AZINE
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This number
contains, in
addition to a
COMPLETE NOVEL,
TWENTY SHORT
STORIES and POEMS,
A THEATRICAL DEPART-
MENT and A REVIEW OF
THE MONTH'S NEW BOOKS

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Vol. XXVII

THE
SMART SET
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No. 1

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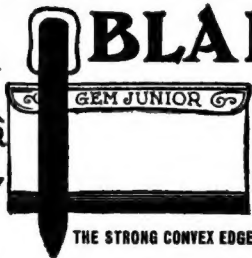
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A FOOL'S WOOING

By RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

"**T**HEN if I am not married before my thirtieth birthday I don't get a red cent!" I exclaimed in consternation. Mr. Woodridge nodded his head calmly. He could afford to be calm. I couldn't, and didn't try to. I pushed back my chair and walked agitatedly to the end of the room. Farther progress in that direction being barred by a set of shelves filled with yellow books, I turned and walked agitatedly back.

"But—but it's perfect nonsense!" I cried, exasperated. "How the dickens can I—can any man get married in a month? I never heard of such a—fool will in my life! If she was so set on having me married, why didn't she allow me a decent length of time to do it in?"

"You forget," replied the lawyer equably, "that your aunt's will was made nearly six years ago, at a time when, as you may recall, she was in poor health and possibly feared an early demise."

"Then she ought to have changed it later," I answered hotly. Mr. Woodridge smiled patiently and slightly shrugged his shoulders.

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Manton, that the condition is—ah—unfortunate, but at the time the will was made—"

"And are you positive that Aunt Amanda never made another one?" I interrupted.

"I have every reason, sir, to believe that this will was the only one your aunt ever executed. She informed me at the time I drew this up for her that there was no previous will. Had

there been a subsequent one, we would have known of it, I am certain. The usual search was made and no further testamentary papers were found."

"Well!" I sank into my chair again and thrust my hands into my trousers' pockets. "Well," I repeated, "it dishes me all right. And what I don't understand is why the old lady should have wanted me to marry. She never married herself, and was forever railing against matrimony. Why, she was foolish on the subject! Look here, Mr. Woodridge, do you think she was—er—all right when she—er—did that?" I nodded at the copy of the will which lay under the lawyer's hand. "There wouldn't be any chance of—what do you call it?—contesting it on the grounds of—er—*non compos mentis*, or whatever it is?"

Mr. Woodridge frowned.

"None, Mr. Manton," he replied severely. "There is not a bit of doubt that Miss Fayles was in full possession of her faculties at the time the will was made and at all times thereafter. It is, of course, your privilege to contest the will, but it is not within my province to advise you in such a matter."

"Would I stand any show?" I asked.

"None, sir, I think. But you should, of course, seek the advice of—ah—other counsel."

"Oh, I suppose there's no use," I said hopelessly. "Well, it dishes me all right. The deuce of it is that I had—that she had always let me think I was to have the whole thing."

"So you have," said Mr. Woodridge drily.

"I should say I had!" I replied

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drearily. "Only there's a string to it. Well, I guess the darned old orphan asylums and homes for aged idiots can have it."

"Then you think that the conditions—or rather the condition—is impossible of fulfilment, Mr. Manton?"

"Well, what do you think?" I asked irascibly. "If you were in my place, do you think you'd have much show at this money? Why, hang it, I don't even know a girl well enough to make love to her! I dare say that if I were already engaged to somebody it might be possible to hustle things along, under the circumstances, and have a wedding before the month is up, but as it is—I" I stopped with a shrug of disgust.

"There would be difficulties, of course," replied the lawyer thoughtfully.

"Difficulties!" I echoed with a hollow laugh.

"But we must remember," continued the lawyer, "that the estate is a considerable one and that there is every reason to suppose that Miss Fayles meant you to come into it. And I gather from your remarks, Mr. Manton, that you are not in a position financially to be indifferent in the matter."

"Indifferent! Well, hardly! My present income amounts to about twenty-five hundred a year, principally interest on my father's estate. Oh, I'm not indifferent! If there were any way to make good I'd do it."

"Then why not think it over, Mr. Manton? You have much in your favor: good looks, good family, education, some slight—pardon me!—not a little reputation as an author. Surely, sir, it isn't beyond the realm of possibility that some lady should be willing to marry you. An estate of upward of seven hundred thousand dollars isn't to be lightly discarded; at least, not without a struggle."

"But the time, man! Think of the time!" I exclaimed a trifle wildly. "Today's the fourteenth of June. My thirtieth birthday is the sixteenth of July. Thirty-two days to find the lady, make her acquaintance, court her, become engaged and marry her!

I fancy that's a pretty stiff proposition, even in this age, Mr. Woodridge!"

"I grant it, Mr. Manton. Perhaps I am too sanguine. But I feel that it is my duty as executor to urge you to make the attempt. At least, think it over."

"Oh, I'll think it over," I replied, as I arose and gathered up hat, stick and gloves. "I'll think it over."

"That's right. After all, Mr. Manton, much may be accomplished in a month by a clever man like you. Fortunes have been made in less time than that, sir."

"And lost," I replied drily. "I—I'll let you hear from me in a day or two."

"As you like. There is no necessity. The estate will remain in trust until the sixteenth of July. You have only to produce proof of marriage before that date, Mr. Manton. Good morning."

"Good morning," I muttered.

Seated again in the hansom I strove to think calmly, but couldn't. My thoughts wouldn't stay placed a moment. Every familiar feature of Broadway drew my attention. Stores and buildings that were as well known to me as the inside of my hat seemed suddenly to possess novel interest. I wondered if men about to die or go into bankruptcy or—or get married felt the way I did. The refrain of a song I had heard the evening before at a theater rang through my head until, as we passed Madison Square, I found myself humming it aloud and keeping time with my stick on the floor of the cab. The awful thought came to me that perhaps I was going insane! Things like that did happen, I knew. There was the case of Cawfinch, the broker—Cawfinch of Cawfinch, Soule & Halliday. The firm went smash at one o'clock one day, and at two Cawfinch appeared at his club, drank a cocktail, went upstairs to his room and shot himself. Having this in mind, it was with something of a shock that I found the hansom had stopped in front of my own club. As for the cocktail—well, I was never one to look with

suspicion upon a friend, but as the sight of the club door suggested the cocktail, so the thought of the cocktail suggested an empty upstairs chamber and five other chambers not empty. In my present confusion of mind I dared not trust myself across the threshold. I might be quite sane, after all, but I didn't care to take the risk. I thrust my stick through the trap and told the cabby to drive to my rooms.

And it was not until I had reached them and was stretched on the leather couch with a pipe between my teeth that it occurred to me that it would have been quite safe to have ventured into my club, since I had had no revolver there, while at the present moment I had only to cross the room and open a drawer of the table to put my hand on one. I laughed, the first natural laugh since Woodridge had sprung that amazing, disappointing announcement on me. One doesn't commit suicide because he finds he has lost what he never really possessed. If I had actually had Aunt Amanda's seven hundred thousand in my possession and then had lost it, well, in that case something desperate like arsenic or a loaded gun wouldn't have been beyond consideration. But I saw now that I had never been nearer the possession of the money than I was at this moment; and at this moment the distance between the thousands and me seemed about the distance between the earth and Saturn, multiplied by the sum of all the frustrations and disillusionments since Eve ate the apple. Which is a long-winded way of indicating the condition of hopelessness in which I found myself.

After I had emptied one pipe and lighted another I discovered that I was able to think of the matter with a fair degree of lucidity. I tried to look the thing square in the face. Summed up in brief, the case was this: I, John Addison Manton, aged twenty-nine years, ten months and twenty-nine days, bachelor, orphan, author of "A First Book of Golf," "Fozzles on Foreign Links" and "A Golfer's Calendar," must take a wife before midnight of the fifteenth of next month or see my Aunt

Amanda's fortune, of which I had all my life considered myself the inheritor, go to numerous charitable institutions, with none of which at the present moment had I a spark of sympathy.

My only love affair had occurred during my sophomore year at college. The object of my fond desires had been a blonde charmer in a florist's shop, who, having passively accepted my attentions for several months, married a car conductor and retired to private life. For the better part of a year I was a confirmed and bitter cynic, a misogynist of the deepest dye. But the wound healed; I discovered the joys of golf, made the University Golf Team and forgot my broken heart and lacerated pride. Since then my dealings with women had been most superficial. I had a speaking acquaintance with quite a number of women, young, old, indeterminate, all doubtless charming, some marriageable, some married. But for the life of me I couldn't recall the name of even one who looked to me like a matrimonial possibility.

I regretted now that I had not gone in more for the sex. Had I but known what was to happen to me I might have paved the way and now have been in position to propose marriage to someone without being adjudged insane. But how was I to have known that Aunt Amanda had it in mind to make the silliest will that ever mortal devised?

Twenty-five hundred a year isn't a large sum of money for one with a nice eye for comforts, a fondness for knocking around the country, and a habit, pleasant but expensive, of golf clubs in hand, retreating southward with the robins and returning northward with the bluebirds. One needed more than a paltry twenty-five hundred to do this comfortably, and I had recognized the fact for some time, but had waited with a fair degree of patience for better days, knowing that my Aunt Amanda could neither live forever nor take her worldly possessions with her when she departed this life. And now—well, now it looked as though twenty-five hundred a year was the best I might ever hope for. Most of this was income on my

father's legacy. My books brought me in a yearly income from royalties which fluctuated from four to six hundred dollars. (It was appalling how comfortably folks managed to get along without buying my books!) Oh, I needed that money, needed it badly! And it seemed to me then that I would willingly have married a Hottentot—I had a very sketchy idea of what a Hottentot was—if by so doing I could have satisfied the conditions of that absurd will. But I didn't know even a Hottentot who would listen to my suit! Despairingly I went over the list of my acquaintances without discovering a single marriageable woman to whom I would have the temerity to propose wedlock. I must then begin at the very beginning, as I had feared. At the end of the third pipe I had taken heart. After all, a month was thirty days, and thirty days was seven hundred and twenty hours, and—and yes, by Jove, I'd try it! And having reached this decision I got into a frock coat and set out to consult Jane.

CHAPTER TWO

I Find the One Woman

I MET Elliot Dederick at college in my freshman year. A year later we were rooming together. We made one society in common, but Elliot was far more popular than I, and managed to penetrate into the inner ring, where, with some half-dozen other socially brilliant chaps, he represented his class in the most exclusive society of all. Being a member of four societies and numerous clubs entails duties; that's why Elliot didn't graduate until a year after I did. Elliot was never a fellow to shirk his duty, even when it meant flunking in finals. As we had become very fond of each other by the end of our senior year, I refused to leave him in the lurch. I returned the following autumn and took a post-graduate course in English and philosophy, and, incidentally, golf. About the first thing Elliot did after graduating was to get

married. I was of no little assistance to him there. Miss Jane Billetdou, of the Baltimore Billetdou tribe, was always more than amply protected by a chaperon in the person of her maiden aunt, Miss Leigh Billetdou. It was my privilege to decoy Miss Leigh to distant places and detain her with eloquent appreciations of the Elizabethan poets while Elliot made love to Jane. One Adirondack summer did the trick, and they were married the next spring and went to live on Long Island in a charming twenty-six room cottage, which Elliot bought from a chap who had ruined himself trying to prove that English foxhounds could be bred in this country without losing their characteristics. I forget now whether his experiments were successful.

Jane was an immense success at once in the fashionable colony of Winterbrook. Hers was the dashing style that looks well either in drawing-room or hunting field. Fairly tall, gracefully slender, dark-haired, black-eyed, with a complexion that made peaches and cream look like whitewash, Jane Dederick was the belle of Winterbrook those first two years following her marriage. Those were pleasant years for me, too. I was one of the family. If I say it myself, I'm an easy chap to get along with; can look out for myself and don't give much trouble. Neither Elliot nor Jane was satisfied unless I spent at least three days a week with them, and, for myself, I was glad enough to do it. I don't believe there was ever a happier young married couple than they were, and I was happy in their happiness. They didn't mind me any; would spoon just as wildly when I was present as when I wasn't. I was a sort of adopted brother to Elliot and a kind of supplementary husband to Jane. When Elliot was away I trotted around with Jane, rode with her, drove with her, fetched and carried for her like a model American husband, well trained and broken. On such infrequent occasions as Jane was absent I kept Elliot company and listened sympathetically for hours at a time while he raved about her. There were two years of this, and

then Elliot broke his neck one November morning in the hunting field.

Jane went abroad with Aunt Leigh, and West Slope was rented to a man from Pittsburg possessed of much money and a desire to "butt in." I spent a mean time of it while Jane was abroad. Elliot's death caught me worse than anything I'd ever known, for my parents had died when I was too young to understand. And I missed Jane. She wrote now and then, and I think those black-bordered letters of hers were the one thing that kept me from going crazy.

She came back in the late summer and went to stay with Elliot's folks over in Jersey. But two months of that was all she could stand, and as her father, who had been artistically drinking himself to death for several years, took it into his head just then to quit the bottle and the body at the same time, Jane Avenue, a neat little house just off the self therein, the Forties and installed herself there, with Aunt Leigh, two maids and a butler. The first time I saw Jane after her return she put her head down on my shoulder and had a good long cry, and I did a little sniffing myself. After that we settled down into a mutually comfortable friendship that meant a whole lot to an aimless chap like me. We were the best of chums. I came and went at all hours of the day or evening, always certain of a welcome from Jane and Miss Leigh, always departing with the jolly feeling that somebody cared a little about me. Jane bossed me tyrannically, charmingly, and Miss Leigh crooned over me if I had a headache and prescribed for me when I had a cold. I had never, since I was old enough to remember anything, had a family of my own. Infrequent and much-dreaded fortnights with Aunt Amanda Fayles had provided me with the nearest approach to home life I had known up to the time Elliot and Jane settled down at West Slope. And so Jane and Miss Leigh and the quiet, homey little house off the Avenue meant a whole lot to me. It was like having a sister and a mother. Jane

consulted me and I consulted her. The difference was that Jane usually did as she liked and I usually did as she advised. And so it was the most natural thing in the world for me to rush around to Jane in my present predicament. For if ever a man needed advice and consolation that man was I!

It was almost five o'clock when Hutchins showed me into the library. Both ladies were there, Aunt Leigh engaged with a piece of delicate embroidery without which she seldom appeared, and Jane sitting by the tea things doing nothing in that busy way of hers. There was a great vase of white lilacs on the table, and the springy odor came to me as I entered. I was glad to find no visitors.

"Tea, Jack?" asked Jane when I had shaken hands and pulled a chair up.

"Please, and very strong."

"Cream, lemon or rum?"

I pondered a moment.

"Which would you advise for a man on the verge of nervous prostration and mental collapse?"

"Rum," answered Jane calmly, "with a dash of tea."

"Let me have it." I had it and it was all right.

"And now," commanded Jane, "tell what has happened."

"I've been to see Woodridge, Aunt Amanda," I replied. Jane's eyes narrowed a little, and she leaned forward with a little gasp of excitement. Aunt Leigh laid her work in her lap and looked across at me anxiously.

"Do you get the money, Jack?" asked Jane.

"She has left it to me, Jane, and there's something over seven hundred thousand in bonds, stocks, real estate and mortgages." Jane sank back again. I must have imagined it, of course, but for a moment I thought she looked disappointed. Aunt Leigh murmured a tremulous congratulation. Then Jane reached her hand across the tea things.

"Jack," she said, "I'm very, very glad for your sake."

I shook hands, but without enthusiasm.

"There is, however," I continued, "a condition."

"A condition?" said Jane.

"A condition?" echoed Aunt Leigh.

"A condition," I confirmed. "I shall be thirty years of age the sixteenth of next month. If I am not married by that time I get nothing."

There was a moment of speechless amazement. In spite of my trouble, I rather enjoyed the impression I had created.

"Why, I never heard of anything so absurd in all my life!" cried Jane indignantly.

"A very remarkable will," murmured her aunt agitatedly.

"You'll contest it, of course," said Jane.

I shook my head doubtfully.

"I don't believe so. Woodridge says it can't be broken. However, I suppose I'd better have someone else give me an opinion."

"Of course he would say that," exclaimed Jane pointedly. "He drew it up, didn't he?"

"Yes, but I fancy he's right about it just the same, Jane."

"What do you intend to do then?" she asked. Jane has a disconcerting habit of coming to the point while I am still hovering in the offing, so to speak. I shrugged my shoulders.

"What can I do?" I asked. "I've been asking myself that question for two hours, and I haven't found the answer. That's why I came up here. I want your advice, Jane."

"I suppose you can do one of two things," she replied, turning Elliot's engagement ring around her finger. "You can marry and get the money or stay single and lose it."

"There's no doubt about the second alternative," I said ruefully, "but as to the first—" I shook my head.

"If you only knew some nice girl," mused Aunt Leigh.

"Nice girls do not, as a rule," quoth Jane a trifle tartly, "marry at a month's notice."

"Then," said I, putting my cup down, "when you said I might marry

and get the money, you didn't have a 'nice' girl in mind?"

"Perhaps I was thinking of a 'personal' in a morning paper: 'Wanted, a woman of high moral character and an open past to marry a gentleman prior to July sixteenth; personal attractiveness appreciated but not essential. In return, the advertiser offers a lifelong gratitude and all the comforts of home.' How would that do, Jack?"

"Jane, dear," began Aunt Leigh, glancing deprecatingly in my direction.

"It's easy enough for you to joke," I said glumly, "but it looks to me like anything but a merry jest. I need that money, Jane. You don't know what it is to have to get along in this town on twenty-five hundred a year. It's absolute penury, Jane!"

"Then why not add to your income in the way I've so often suggested?" asked Jane sweetly.

"Work?"

Jane nodded serenely.

"I thought we'd thrashed that out for good and all," I answered gloomily. "I couldn't make ten dollars a week, and you know it just as well as I do. Or perhaps I might make fifteen if I taught school or became a professional golfer and got a position with some club. In that case I might, by teaching a lot of silly Willies the difference between a bunker and a claret lemonade, make rather more than that. I believe, too, that there is something to be picked up on the side by mending clubs and selling balls. We will say twenty-five a month during the season. But it doesn't appeal to me. Unfortunately, I was brought up like a gentleman, and that's a big handicap in this age."

"You think, then, that marrying a girl as a matter of convenience, giving her nothing but your name and an interest in a few hundred thousand—"

"Nothing but!" I interrupted. "Great Scott! Isn't that a good deal?"

"You think that is more—more 'gentlemanly' than earning your living by work?"

"Jane, dear!" murmured Aunt Leigh.

"If the girl didn't object," I said, "I don't see why it wouldn't be all right. Lots of girls marry like that every day. I'd do the square thing by her, of course; I'd settle a couple of hundred thousand on her outright if she liked. Besides, you take it for granted that it must necessarily be only a business arrangement. I don't see that, Jane. Why couldn't I fall in love with her? And why couldn't she—well, be a little fond of me? I'm no Apollo, I know, and I'm not brilliant, but, hang it, lots of fellows—"

"Jack," laughed Jane, "you're delicious! You think, do you, that you could fall in love with a girl at a moment's notice? And inspire her with like sentiments?"

"Perhaps not, but there'd be plenty of time for making love after we were married," I replied. "Look at the French marriages."

"I don't care to," answered Jane decidedly.

I appealed to Aunt Leigh.

"What do you think?" I asked. She replied without looking up from her embroidery. I think she was afraid Jane's look would intimidate her.

"I think, Mr. Manton," she said, "that if you can find a girl who is willing to accept you under the—conditions, it would be quite right to—to marry her. I dare say it wouldn't turn out any worse than lots of other marriages. I've always thought you would make an excellent husband for someone. But I do think you should try to find a girl who is sensible, not one of the flighty kind; one who would look after you, Mr. Manton, and make you take care of yourself."

"Auntie means a girl who would make you put on your winter flannels promptly on the fifteenth of October, and take them off promptly on the fifteenth of May," said Jane smilingly.

"Jane!" exclaimed Aunt Leigh. "Such talk, my dear!"

"Oh, that's nothing," answered Jane gaily. "You should hear some of the things we speak about, auntie. No article of masculine or feminine apparel is sacred to us, auntie; we are quite

brazen. That is the beauty of a purely platonic friendship, isn't it, Jack? Why, only last month Jack lectured me severely for wearing thin stockings with low shoes."

She put a slim ankle out from under her skirt and viewed it reflectively.

"It was during a spell of cold, rainy weather, Aunt Leigh," I said defensively. "I came across her downtown with the merest apology for stockings on, low shoes and the shortest skirt that I ever saw off the stage!"

"Jack! You're perfectly horrid. It was that Oxford walking suit, auntie, and you know that the skirt is really quite long."

"Well, all I know is," I replied maliciously, "that when you got into the carriage I could see—"

"Jack!"

"Mr. Manton is quite right, Jane," said Aunt Leigh firmly. "That skirt is positively indecent. I've always said so."

"Oh, if you two are going to form an offensive alliance, I give up," said Jane. "You're always getting together to bully me. Besides, I don't see what all this has to do with Jack's approaching marriage."

"If it only was approaching!" I sighed.

"Never say die," rejoined Jane with animation. "Let us look over the field, Jack, and decide on a victim."

"Thanks," I muttered.

"Now, whom do you know? Let me see." She drew her brows together in a contemplative frown. "Geraldine Mason?"

"If I were to marry her," I replied, "I might as well take my time about it. She has a million or so of her own, hasn't she?"

"I believe so. Then how about May Biddle?"

I shuddered. Jane laughed.

"Oh, but you can't afford to be too particular, Jack," she reminded. "Beggars musn't be choosers."

"But she's a perfect fright, Jane!"

"But think of seven hundred thousand, Jack!"

I shook my head stubbornly.

"I couldn't do it for seven millions," I said.

"That Prentice girl, Jane, is very attractive, don't you think?" ventured her aunt. "The younger one, I mean."

"That's so, Aunt Leigh," I said. "She might do, eh, Jane?"

But Jane shook her head.

"I don't care for her," she replied. "She's a little idiot."

"But you're not marrying her," I remonstrated. "Now I don't see why Marie Prentice wouldn't be just the girl."

"Jack," said Jane calmly, "you may be going to do the marrying, but I'm going to do the selecting. What do you think of Grace Hooper?"

"Great Scott, Jane!" I exclaimed. "Can't you think of anything but freaks?"

"It's a freakish thing from start to finish, Jack, and I'll wager that only a freak will go into it."

"That's a bit hard on me," I muttered.

"Not at all," replied Jane cheerfully. "I don't question your attractions, Jack, but you must remember that the girl isn't going to marry you; she's going to marry your Aunt Amanda's seven hundred thousand!"

"I don't see that. Anyhow, I'm not going to marry any such freaks as May Biddle or that Hooper girl. That's flat!"

"Well, then, Norma Mendell?"

"Why, she hasn't any more than shed her weeds!"

Jane shrugged her shoulders.

"I fancy she's quite ready to cultivate a new crop, Jack," she said. "Besides, Tim Mendell left her rather badly off, and I'm sure she'd at least give you an audience."

"She won't do," I answered positively. "Widows are barred, Jane."

Jane bowed.

"Thank you," she said sweetly.

"Oh, you know what I mean," I exclaimed. "If you can find me one half as nice as you are, Jane, I'll see it through."

"Have some more tea," she laughed. I declined.

"Mr. Berkenside," announced Hutchins reverently from the doorway. I looked annoyed. I didn't like Waldy Berkenside. He had large, dreamy, brown eyes and a yellow Vandyke beard. Besides, I knew well enough that he was after Jane's money. I hate that sort of thing. I arose as he came down the room and paused to shake hands with Aunt Leigh in his irritatingly impressive way.

"I'm going," I growled to Jane. "When can I see you again?"

"Come tonight to the Hudson," she answered. "We have a box. There'll be lots of room, and perhaps we can discover your affinity in the audience. Good-bye, Jack. Don't be discouraged. Leave it all to me."

"Yes, and find myself married to a human monstrosity," I grumbled. "Hello, Berkenside."

"How are you?" he replied, shaking hands languorously. "Any more fozzles on foreign links lately, old man?"

"No," I answered shortly, shook hands with Aunt Leigh and left. I heard Berkenside laughing idiotically as Hutchins closed the door behind me.

I reached the theater that evening rather late. It wasn't a bad show. I had seen it once, and, besides, I hate things that make you choky. I bought admission. It's wise to do that when your income is only about two hundred a month. The house was dim, and it was impossible to distinguish the occupants of the boxes. So I stood back and waited for the lights to go up. It was a long wait filled with subdued sniffles and the sound of noses softly blown. But at last the house brightened and my gaze sought the left-hand box. I didn't see Jane, but what I did see interested me wonderfully.

There were four persons in that box—a gentleman of about fifty-five, a woman slightly younger, and two girls. It was the girl who sat with her shoulder to the stage that caught my attention and held it willy-nilly. Never, I thought excitedly, had I ever seen a more charming girl. She looked to be

eighteen, but might have been a year older. Her hair was the color of my watch case, she had the fair pink and white skin of an English girl and her eyes, even at a distance, were large and velvety and deeply blue like the petals of a clematis. Beautiful perhaps she was not, strictly speaking, for her features were scarcely classic; the nose was short and the mouth like a rosebud. But charming she surely was, and lovely and adorable. As I, looked at her, absolutely enthralled, she turned her gaze slowly from the stage, and for a moment it seemed to me that our eyes gazed straight into each other across the house, although in the next moment I realized that to her I could be nothing more than a spot of white shirt-front back there in the gloom. But in that instant I knew! Knew that there was the girl for me! That none other would do! That if Aunt Amanda's wealth was to be mine, there, with softly rounded chin in hand, the light agleam in the meshes of her golden hair, sat the one woman who would share it with me!

CHAPTER THREE

Jane Promises to Help

JANE'S box was at the other side of the stage. With her were Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Fife and Aunt Leigh. The Fifes I already knew, and so I was able to slip into a chair at the back of the box with only a handshake for Mrs. Fife and bows for the others. For the rest of the act I was at liberty to give all my attention to the girl in the opposite box.

She was still leaning her elbow on the cushioned ledge and nestling her chin in the cup of her hand. From where I sat I had an almost full view of her face, although her eyes were fixed upon the stage. If she had appeared charming from the back of the theater, she was even more so seen at closer range. The light from the stage threw an aureole about her wonderful hair, and made her complexion,

against the background of the dark hangings, look startlingly clear.

Observing attentively now, I gave her credit for that other year; she was undoubtedly past her nineteenth birthday. She was apparently of medium height, and her form was still in the unfinished stage of girlhood. She was like a slim, daintily rounded bud of a pink tea rose, I thought, and smiled at myself for the fancy. She was, I told myself, my ideal of feminine loveliness. If one had to marry, surely a girl like that could make wedded life quite endurable. You are not to suppose that I had lost my heart on the instant. On the contrary, the sentiment that possessed me was admiration only. So far, it was my head and not my heart that was affected. But, thought I, if it is necessary to fall in love the task won't prove difficult!

The curtain went down on the first act. Mr. Fife yielded his chair to me and, after an exchange of amenities with his wife and a word with Aunt Leigh, I leaned over Jane's shoulder.

"I thought you were not coming," she said.

"I've seen the play," I answered. "It is you who are the attraction to-night." My eyes, traitor to my words, went past hers to the opposite box. Jane smiled with a little skeptical arching of her eyebrows that was a trick of hers. I had never seen her look more stunning than tonight, I thought; never more beautiful. I was proud of her.

"Jane, you've got them all stymied tonight," I said admiringly.

"Really?" she asked. "Do you think I look nicer than she does, Jack?" She turned her head and with a swift glance indicated the golden-haired girl in the opposite box. I wondered if she had noticed my interest in the latter. I didn't think it possible, however, for I was certain that Jane had not so much as glanced around at me after her first nod of welcome. I answered composedly and quite honestly.

"You two aren't comparable, Jane," I said. "She's pretty, quite charming,

very attractive, even lovely; you are beautiful."

Her glance fell and she raised the bunch of crimson roses in her lap and smelled them. Then she smiled at me.

"Jack," she said softly, "you're an awful flatterer, but I rather like it. I know you don't really think I'm nice—that is, *very* nice, and you don't think I'm more than, well, passably good-looking, but you lie beautifully."

"Vanity, thy name is Jane!" I laughed. "Not content with the simple statement that you are beautiful, you want it signed, sealed and sworn to before a notary."

Jane only smiled tranquilly. You can't usually ruffle a woman by calling her vain, so long as you grant that she has reason for it.

"And you like me, Jack?" she asked softly.

"Yes, even when you try to flirt with me."

"Oh, I never do!" she cried in whispers.

"You're trying it now," I replied accusingly. She leaned away and regarded me with a queer, inscrutable smile that I couldn't fathom. It's a good plan to change the subject when things get too deep for you. So I said:

"Who is that girl over there, Jane?"

"Gladys Chayce," replied Jane. "Do you like her?"

"Immensely," I answered. "I don't think I ever saw a girl who—who impressed me the way she does. In fact, I've decided that she's the girl for me, Jane."

"You've decided—*what?*" exclaimed Jane.

"That she's the one to marry," I answered calmly. "That is, if there are no impediments in the shape of husbands or fiancés. Are there?"

"Not that I'm aware of," replied Jane a trifle coldly. I rather expected that she'd resent my making my own selection, but it couldn't be helped now.

"Who is she? I mean who are her people and—all that?"

"Her father is dead. Her mother is Mrs. William Knowles Chayce. Mr.

Chayce was in the leather business, I believe."

"A very respectable business," I approved. "He left the family well off?"

"No."

"But you said it was leather he was in, didn't you? I thought—"

"They have no money at all, I think, and only one asset."

"And that is?"

"Gladys," answered Jane.

"Then—" I began eagerly. But Jane turned and regarded me pityingly.

"Jack, Mrs. Chayce is hunting bigger game. I don't think that anything less than a million would satisfy her."

"Well, give me seven hundred thousand," I returned cheerfully, "and I'll manage the million before the wooden wedding comes around. If I can't make ten per cent a year on five hundred thousand of that I'll give it away to charity. And how about the girl, Jane? Do you fancy she's holding out for the million?"

Jane shrugged her shoulders.

"I can't say. I fancy, though, that she's rather silly and romantic. There was talk of that young Roulard boy last year, I think, but doubtless mamma soon put a stop to that."

"Chris Roulard? But he hasn't any money, has he?"

"Of course not; that's the trouble. He only has family. So I fancy he was given to understand that—"

"Welcome on the mat wasn't meant for him," I suggested. "Anyhow, she seems to have survived the separation. She isn't looking like a girl with a broken heart."

"H'm," said Jane dryly. "Perhaps, but she's looking toward the back of the theater pretty frequently, and I thought I saw Mr. Roulard as I came in."

"Oh!" said I.

"On the whole, Jack, I don't think you would succeed there."

"I don't see why not," I protested. "She can't marry young Roulard; if I haven't a million I'll have the next thing to it; and—and I like her looks, Jane. In fact, I think I'll enter."

"Then you're a fool, Jack!"

Jane had called me that before, but this time there was a certain unflattering tone of conviction and enthusiasm in her voice.

"I suppose I am," I responded soothingly. "I dare say I'm a fool to try to get that money, anyhow. But I'm going to. And as I haven't any time to waste, and as one girl's as good as another—"

"A bunch of pink and white prettiness," interrupted Jane scornfully. "I thought you had better taste."

"Oh, come now, Jane," I protested, "she's one of the best-looking here." "Don't you want anything more than her?" Jane demanded.

"Yes, I suppose so. But well, this is all pretty new to me, Jane. I've never been married before, and I don't quite know what points a fellow ought to look for. What would you suggest?"

"Nothing," she answered shortly.

"Oh, but I say!" I protested. "I thought you were going to help me through with this."

She met my pleading look with a stare of haughty amazement. If I hadn't known Jane like a book I would have withered.

"You—thought—I was going—to help you!" she said incredulously.

"Of course I did," I asserted. "Didn't you say this afternoon that—that I was to come here tonight and we'd see if we couldn't find a victim?"

Jane turned her eyes away and I pursued her retreat.

"And now I—we have found the victim." I glanced across at Miss Chayce. "And you're going to help me, aren't you, Lady?"

"Lady Jane" was a nickname Elliot and I had for her in the old days, and I had discovered that the use of it still exercised a certain potency. Jane's eyelashes fluttered down; she sighed, and then she looked around with a little grave smile.

"I'll help you, Jack," she said softly. I found her hand under the crimson roses and pressed it gratefully. "But," she went on, "I don't think there is

much I can do. You see, I hardly know the Chayces well enough to introduce you, Jack."

I looked disappointed.

"Who is that with her?" I asked. "Is the lady her mother?"

"No, that's Mrs. Milham. The gentleman is Mr. Milham, and the dark-haired girl is Daisy Milham."

"Milham—Milton—I muttered. "Don't you know them, Jane?" "I dare say," she replied indifferently.

"I'll bet I do. Are Daisy Milham and Miss Chayce very friendly?"

"I don't know," said Jane.

"There's one thing that bothers me," I remarked after a moment. "Supposing I go in for Gladys Chayce and she decides at the last moment that I won't do, Jane?"

"Then you'll have to begin again, I suppose," replied Jane lightly.

"Yes, but don't you see there wouldn't be time? You don't think, do you, that it would be advisable to—er—have someone else in view, Jane?"

She laughed at me.

"Jack Manton," she cried, "are you proposing to make love to two girls at the same time?"

"Why, er—no, not exactly that, I guess," I replied. "But I thought I might sort of—stand in with another, you see, in case of accident."

"You're absolutely absurd!" said Jane impatiently.

"Then you wouldn't advise it? Merely as a matter of—er—security?"

"I would not," said Jane emphatically. "You're perfectly silly!"

"Very well. You know best. Only you can't deny that I would be in a deuce of a pickle if Miss Chayce decided not to marry me after I'd wasted two or three weeks on her, Jane!"

"It would serve you right!" said Jane with asperity. "Besides, I don't see the necessity of all this planning, anyhow. Maybe that nonsensical will can be broken."

"That's so," I said hopefully. "I'll find out tomorrow. Maybe I won't have to get married after all, Jane. Do you know, you're an awful comfort to a

chap! You always find the bright side of things."

Jane laughed again, just as though she didn't really want to laugh but had to. I smiled sympathetically, although I didn't know what the joke was. And I didn't have time to ask, for at that moment Waldo Berkenside came in and ~~and I saw~~ ^{and I saw} and left. Outside the theater I ~~remembered~~ ^{realized} that I should have cast a last fond, ~~yearing~~ ^{yearing} look at my future bride as I came out. Instead of that, I had been too full of annoyance at Berkenside to remember her. It was funny how that chap got on my nerves!

I jumped into a taxicab, lighted a cigar and went home to think things over. Now that my mind was recovering from its first confusion, the knowledge that I really had something to think about was both pleasant and exciting. I felt quite important—almost like a man of affairs!

CHAPTER FOUR

I Reconnoiter

I WAS up early the next morning and down town before Trinity's chimes had rung eleven. I realized that for once time was money with me. In fact, when I thought that already nearly twenty-four hours of my seven hundred and odd were gone, I got quite panicky and threatened the cabby with bodily injury if he didn't hurry. I had not seen Mr. Gilchrist, my father's lawyer, for five or six years, but I had found by referring to the telephone directory that he was still alive and in business, and I hoped from him to get an opinion on the legality of Aunt Amanda's will for a reasonable fee. Luckily I found him in and didn't have to wait for an audience. He was a thin little man, precise and didactic, and I was disappointed to observe that neither the mention of my own name nor my father's moved him to any show of geniality. I put my case to him and he listened silently while I floundered about, re-

peating things and mixing it all up. He was a good listener. When I had talked myself out he appeared to come out of a trance.

"Very good, Mr—"

"Manton," I assisted.

"Mr. Manton—thank you. I will examine the will at once and let you have my opinion within a day or two."

"Thank you," I muttered. "Do you think—"

"I can say nothing until I've seen the will," he said.

And as there remains so little time, ~~and~~ ^{and} I be very much obliged if you would let ~~me~~ ^{me} know—

"Within a day or—"

"Thank you. And ~~as~~ ^{as} payment, I ought to tell you ~~that~~ ^{that} in regard to not in position to—er—"

Mr. Gilchrist showed symptoms of animation.

"Do you mean that you can't pay me, sir?" he asked sternly.

"Oh, no, not that," I protested quickly. "Only that my income is small and—er—"

"We will speak of payment afterward," said the lawyer with a wave of his hand. "Good morning, Mr—"

"Manton," I repeated.

"Thank you, Mr. Manton."

He bowed me through the door with little waves of his hands. I felt like an intrusive chicken being "shooed" out. In the outer office I had the presence of mind to write my telephone number on one of my cards and hand it to a clerk.

"Kindly give that to Mr. Gilchrist," I said, "and ask him to call me up as soon as he has anything to tell me. And, by the way, you might call his attention to the name. It is Manton, M-a-n-t-o-n, Manton. Thank you."

Well, I reflected when I had regained my cab, there were two days to intervene between me and certainty. But, meanwhile, I had no intention of wasting time. I would begin my campaign. Then, if the decision as to the legality of the will was in my favor, it would be a simple matter to retreat from the field. I had the cabby put me down at my club, the Urban, and was lucky

enough to discover in the café the very man I wanted.

Ned Carpenter, better known as "Noodles," knew everyone. He prided himself on it; in fact, he made the collecting of friends and acquaintances a sort of hobby. He was forever greeting you with: "Hello, Old Bones! By the way, I met a chap today you ought to know; awfully interesting duffer; you must meet him. Let me tell you about it." A good many persons considered Noodles a bore, and I was rather inclined that way myself. But I had always been decent to him, and now I was glad of it, since it gave me the privilege of taking the empty seat at his table.

"Hello, Old Bones," he greeted. "Thought you over in Philadelphia or somewhere knocking holes in a blooming golf course. That reminds me, Manton, I ran across a fellow the other day—"

"I know," I interrupted gently but firmly. "You think I ought to meet him. But we'll let that go for a minute. What I want to do now is—"

"Don't ask it, old chap," said Noodles sorrowfully, "I give you my word I'm broke. Sorry, really, but—"

"Oh, I don't want to borrow," I said impatiently. "I want—"

"To settle?" he asked eagerly. I looked annoyed. Noodles is a tactless beggar sometimes. But when one wants a service it is well to be diplomatic. So I asked:

"Oh, well, how much was it?"

"Twenty-five," answered Noodles. He seemed a bit surprised. When I held it across he took it hesitatingly and said, "Look here, Old Bones, I don't need all this, really. Ten will carry me through until tomorrow, and after that I'm all right. You'd better keep the rest." But I shook my head. What is fifteen dollars to a man who is going to have seven hundred thousand—perhaps?

"Well, then," said Noodles, "you'll stay with me this afternoon and we'll blow it in. What do you say?"

But I shook my head again, smiling

leniently as a man of affairs will smile at the vagaries of the idle.

"Impossible, my dear fellow," I assured him. "The fact is, Noodles, I'm rather busy these days, and that brings me back to what I was going to ask you."

"All right, fire ahead," said Noodles, stuffing the bills in his waistcoat pocket and viewing critically the overdone chop which the waiter placed before him. (We members of the Urban like to pretend that the cuisine at our club is everything that it should be, but as a matter of fact, it is fairly indifferent. Although, while the Urban is rather exclusive and the assessment comparatively small, we perhaps get quite all we pay for. Still, it is a good plan to seem critical or dissatisfied at times; it keeps the service up.) I ordered my own luncheon before I continued. Then:

"Do you know the Chayces, Noodles?" I asked.

"Well, rather!" he said.

"Well enough to introduce me?"

Noodles had difficulty with a baked potato, but at last he repeated my question judicially:

"Well enough to introduce you? Well, frankly, I don't, Old Bones. I know them well enough to speak to, don't you know, and of course I've been asked to the house."

"Of course."

"But I've never been. What's the use, eh? The daughter is a beauty, of course, a regular stunner, but—" he shrugged his shoulders. "You see what I mean?"

"No, I don't," I said. "What do you mean?"

"Why, that a chap wants more than just looks, of course." I recalled Jane's remark of like tenor, and began to think that there might be something in it. "Now Gladys Chayce is pretty, all right, but when you've said that you've said it all. No mind, no wit, no magnetism. I'd just as soon talk to one of those life-sized photographs down there in what's-his-name's window on Broadway."

"I don't see that a fellow needs mind

and magnetism in a wife," I said fretfully. "Seems to me the less mind she has the less trouble she'll give you."

"Who said anything about a wife?" asked Noodles, looking startled. "Good Lord, man, I'm not looking for a wife!"

"Well, I thought you were talking about her as—"

"Not as a wife, Old Bones! Besides, I couldn't afford her. She hasn't a sou. The old man went broke just before he died, and—"

"He was in the leather business, wasn't he?" I asked. "I thought folks in the leather business always had slathers of money."

"Maybe, but old Chayce didn't leave any. I think he made some sort of patent leather."

"Oh," I said, viewing my shoes disgustedly. "If he made the leather I'm wearing it served him right. So you don't think you could introduce me, Noodles?"

"Sorry, but I really don't. Of course, if you happened to be with me as they came along—"

"All right. Now, one thing more: who are the Milhams?"

"Stocks. Milham went broke two years ago and is just getting on his feet again. A good sort, too; I'm glad of it. They used to have a big place on Long Island, and—"

"I know!" I interrupted. "Milham-hurst. I used to know them slightly in Elliot Dederick's time."

"Exactly," agreed Noodles. "They lost their place when the smash came. If you want an introduction there—"

"N-no, I guess not," I said. "I fancy Mrs. Milham will recollect me if I jog her memory a bit."

"She's a nice old thing," said Noodles approvingly. "I used to go to see them quite a bit last year, but—well, when there's a marriageable daughter in the family it's best to be careful. I've known beastly accidents to happen that way, Old Bones. Fellows didn't really mean anything, you understand; just pure carelessness, and then, all of a sudden—presto! Ring, announcements, altar—stung! No, sir, a chap can't be too careful!"

"Where do the Milhams live?" I asked.

"They have an apartment at the Empress Eugénie. I suppose the old chap's living a bit close at present. They don't entertain much. By the way, that fellow I was speaking about is—"

"Another time, Noodles," I said as I pushed my chair back from the table. "I've—er—got an appointment; a business appointment," I specified in response to Noodles' comprehensive grin. He looked impressed.

"Well, bye-bye; see you again, Old Bones."

It was only half-past two. I walked across to my rooms and dressed leisurely for a call on Mrs. Milham. I am always a bit fussy about what I wear—fussier than I have any right to be with my income—and today I took extraordinary care in dressing. At four I rang for a hansom, stuck a gardenia, which I had saved from yesterday, in the lapel of my frock coat, and sallied forth to a reconnaissance.

CHAPTER FIVE

I Meet Miss Chayce

"It is a long time since we have seen you, Mr. Manton."

Mrs. Milham arose and swept toward me across the room in folds of white and violet striped silk. Over her shoulder I saw a dark head and a fair one close together against the gray background of a Holland-covered cabinet. The drawing-room was, in fact, shrouded in its summer coverings, and I silently congratulated myself that I had not delayed my visit longer.

"My dear Mrs. Milham," I answered as I took her hand and bent over it, "I don't deserve a welcome. It must be four years since I gave myself the pleasure of calling. That was on Long Island, a few weeks before Elliot Dederick was killed. I saw you at the theater last evening and resolved that today, if I had the courage, I would call."

"I never hold young men too closely to social obligations," replied Mrs. Milham kindly. "You are quite forgiven."

I didn't relish the deception, but it was a big stake I was playing for and I couldn't afford to be squeamish. Besides, I doubted if my hostess was really deceived.

"Do you remember my daughter, Mr. Manton?" she asked as I followed her across the room. "Very likely you do not; Daisy was not out when we used to see you at Milhamhurst. Daisy, this is Mr. Manton."

She was rather a plain girl, with dark hair and a good complexion. But her eyes very nearly redeemed her, and she had a smile that was distinctly charming.

"And have you met Miss Chayce?" pursued Mrs. Milham.

"I have never had the pleasure," I replied, as I took the soft, smooth hand extended to me and looked into the deep blue eyes. Gladys Chayce smiled radiantly and murmured, "How do you do?" in a voice that somehow was a distinct disappointment. It was a clear, well-modulated voice, but it seemed to lack expression. And before many minutes had passed I discovered that lack of expression was typical of her as a whole; face, voice and manner were all deficient in that regard. But I brushed aside the qualm of disappointment. One had only to look at her loveliness to lose sight of all imperfections. It was a wonderful stroke of luck to find her here today, and I accepted it as a good augury of success. The conversation, directed by Mrs. Milham, dwelt for a few minutes on the old days at Milhamhurst and West Slope.

"You know," said Mrs. Milham smilingly, "we had to give up Milhamhurst when my husband met with business reverses some two years ago."

I expressed my regrets.

"We were all very sorry, for we were greatly attached to the place. I think Mr. Milham felt it, perhaps, as deeply as any of us. He was very fond of the outdoor life he led there. Daisy,

too, is more of a country girl than a city girl." Daisy smiled and shook her head.

"Mamma, Mr. Manton will think I'm a hayseed if you talk that way," she protested.

"But you," continued Mrs. Milham, glancing at the band on my sleeve, "you, I fear, have met with a more tragic bereavement than ours, Mr. Manton. I'm not intruding on your sorrow?" she added sweetly.

"My aunt died a fortnight ago," I answered. "She was my mother's sister, Miss Fayles."

Mrs. Milham murmured sympathetically.

"I wonder if I ever met her?" she asked.

"I hardly think so. She lived a very quiet, almost secluded, life at a little place in Rhode Island called Quinepog."

"Why, that," said Daisy, "is where we're going, mamma!"

"Yes, Quinepog Beach, Mr. Manton. Do you know anything about it? Is it near where your aunt lived?"

"About three miles distant," I replied. "I have never been there to stay, but I fancy it is quite pleasant. You are to spend the summer there?"

"Yes, some friends who have a place there recommended it. We have taken a small cottage for the season. I don't believe it will be very exciting for Daisy, but Gladys is going to spend a good deal of the time with us, and I dare say you will have a nice time." She smiled at her daughter, and Daisy smiled contentedly back at her.

"That is very good news for me, Mrs. Milham," I said, "for I expect to be at Quinepog a portion of the summer myself. My aunt was kind enough to leave some property to me and—er—there will be things to attend to."

"Why, now, that's splendid!" exclaimed Mrs. Milham, and the two girls murmured an echo. "I'm afraid that Quinepog is rather a quiet resort, and not popular with the younger folks. I hope you will take pity on us and look us up."

"I should like to take pity on myself,

Mrs. Milham, and if I do that you are certain to have me on your hands quite frequently. I fancy I sha'n't know anyone there except you, although I believe there is a fairly decent hotel there, and perhaps I may find an acquaintance or two. It is very kind of you to want me. You are leaving town soon?"

"The day after tomorrow," replied Mrs. Milham. "So far, the weather has dealt very leniently with us, don't you think? But one never can tell when a hot spell will set in. And a New York apartment is so hot when it makes up its mind to be. One can't open it up as one can a house and get drafts. Shall you be in Quinepog this month, Mr. Manton?"

"Almost at once," I replied easily. "I expect to go down there on Saturday. If I do, I shall look you up Sunday if I may."

"By all means. Mr. Milham will be so glad to see you again. He has never ceased to talk about a game of golf you two played once. I dare say you have quite forgotten it, but Mr. Milham hasn't. Ever since then he has taken a sort of proprietary interest in you and speaks of your successes as though he were in a measure responsible for them."

"Papa was terribly grumpy and cut up," laughed Daisy, "because you didn't win the cup at Pinehurst last February. He declares that if you had played your best game you would have had it easily."

"That's very kind of him," I laughed, "but the fact is that I was up against a much better man. I believe there is a rather decent course at Quinepog, and perhaps Mr. Milham will do me the honor of trying conclusions again. Do you play, Miss Milham?" She shook her head.

"No, but I've tried. Gladys and I used to play sometimes at Milhamhurst but I *couldn't* hit the ball and Gladys *wouldn't*."

"Daisy did beautifully," said Miss Chayce in response to my look of inquiry, "but I never could have learned. Besides, it used to tire me, and the sun was so hot."

"I fancy," I replied, "you'll find the Quinepog links much cooler, and if you would allow me I should be very glad to show you a few of the tricks." My glance included both of the girls. Daisy blushed a little with pleasure, but Gladys only smiled sweetly and serenely as she replied:

"I couldn't think of letting you waste your time with me, Mr. Manton, but I know Daisy would love to learn; wouldn't you, dear?"

"Yes, but I'm too much of a duffer to let Mr. Manton bother himself with me," said Daisy. "I appreciate the honor, though," she added, smilingly and gratefully.

"We've all been duffers at some time," I answered. "And when I reach Quinepog I shall hope to overcome your scruples." I turned to Gladys again. "And I shall try to persuade you, too, Miss Chayce, to make another attempt. Golf is too good a sport to be judged and discarded hastily."

She only smiled, but during the rest of my stay I knew that she was observing me interestedly. Already she was considering me as a possible suitor. I took my leave soon after, and the last glance I met as I left the drawing-room was hers, smiling, speculative. I departed more than satisfied with my afternoon's work. Fate had played into my hands. Already I held in imagination Aunt Amanda's seven hundred thousand. My success seemed to demand some token, and so I stopped at a florist's and ordered half a dozen roses sent to Jane. With them went a card on which I had written: "The first skirmish has resulted in a brilliant victory."

It was only fair that Jane should know of my luck.

CHAPTER SIX

Jane Is Unsympathetic

Two days later I heard from Gilchrist. There were four typewritten sheets of the mixiest lot of muddle I ever tried to wade through. It wasn't until I'd

reached the last paragraph that I got the sense of it. Then I was disappointed, for I had grown rather hopeful that I was to get Aunt Amanda's money without paying the penalty. But Gilchrist dashed my hopes, said he could discover no grounds whereon the will might be set aside, unless it was that I could establish thoroughly the fact that the testatrix was of unsound mind at the time of making the will. In which case, said Mr. Gilchrist, it would be best to interest all near relatives—everyone, in fact, who might hope to benefit by a distribution of the property. In case I decided to test the validity of the will, however, Mr. Gilchrist would be, he assured me, pleased to act in the matter for me.

Well, that set me thinking. It hadn't occurred to me before that if the will was set aside I'd get only a portion of the estate. I knew that there was a veritable horde of cousins. Aunt Amanda had had almost as many cousins as I had creditors, and I had a troubled vision of them descending like a plague of locusts and eating up the estate before my eyes. Besides, I had a sneaking idea that in case the will was broken the State would step in ahead of the locusts and bite off a hunk for itself. Why, supposing that there were ten of us altogether to share alike, that would mean, perhaps, that I was to receive but a paltry seventy thousand! To be sure, seventy thousand added to the forty-odd which I already possessed would give me an income of fifty-five hundred dollars a year, and that wasn't so bad, but when you've been gazing steadily at seven hundred thousand, seventy thousand looks like a mere bump on a log. No; I'd have it all or none. It should be me or the charities; the locusts should be entirely eliminated. I only hoped that it wouldn't occur to the locusts to get together and spoil it all!

Having made up my mind, I resolved to lose no more time. I spent the evening packing up. It was the hottest sort of a hot night, and in spite of the fact that all the windows were open and that I divested myself of all super-

fluous attire, I spent an unpleasant two hours. I suppose another chap would have had that packing done in thirty minutes, but packing with me is a lost art, even though I have it to do pretty frequently. Ordinarily a steamer trunk and a bag suffice for my trips, but now, since, as a matter of economy, I had decided to sublet my apartment for the summer, if possible, it was necessary to get everything out except the pictures and ornaments.

I've often wondered how other persons pack. There must be some simple and yet scientific method that I have never mastered, else I am sure our institutions for the care of demented citizens would long since have overflowed. As for me, I flatter myself that my method is simple enough, but I own that it is anything but scientific. I begin by placing trunks and bags in the center of the floor with their lids invitingly open. Then I start at one corner of the room and work around to it again, encompassing, so to speak, the four walls of the apartment, and on the way emptying every receptacle of its treasures. These—the treasures—I toss blithely toward the trunks. Having denuded the bedroom, I start on the sitting-room, observing the same method. I then make the circuit of each room again, religiously opening every drawer and closet and collecting the things which escaped me on the first tour. After that I enter the bathroom and close the door behind me. Closing the door reveals my dressing-gown, which, otherwise would be left behind. I take the dressing-gown from its hook, lay it in the bathtub and gather into it the contents of the cabinet and stand. When it is full of bottles, wet sponges, bath gloves and brushes, I add it to the accumulation about the trunks. Fortifying myself now with a Scotch and soda, I light a cigarette and, seating myself on the tallest pile of clothing, begin to pack.

You have, of course, watched mail clerks distribute letters and papers into pouches hung open before them. Practice has lent me almost as much dexterity. Riding boots? I toss them neatly into the traveling trunk.

Shirts? They follow the boots. Razor case? A nonchalant twist of the wrist and it carroms off the storage trunk into the bag. More shirts? I skim one cleverly into the bag and the others into the traveling trunk. Sponge? It arches prettily and lands with a sob on top of the shirt in the bag. Books? Smash—bang—into the storage trunk. And so it goes. There is scarcely a moment's indecision, and I seldom make mistakes. (When I do I discover them when I unpack.) Having cleaned the floor as far as I can reach, I shift my position. I am sure that could you see me there, sitting cross-legged in the confusion of my assembled lares and penates, crooning a little song, a cigarette dangling from the corner of my mouth, and watch me distribute the articles as they come to hand, you would realize that Uncle Sam's postal employees have much to learn in the matter of dexterity and joyful abandon. Having denuded the floor, there remains but to close and lock the trunk and bag.

Of course it sometimes happens that a trunk exhibits a disinclination to "go shut." I have heard of those who in such crises trample the contents down with their feet. I don't favor that method. I prefer to bring persuasion to bear on the lid. Only once has this method disappointed me. On that occasion my trunk was brought to my room at a Southern hotel with ten inches of blue shirt-sleeve, which had escaped my vigilance when closing the lid, dangling from one end, much torn and blemished.

Certainly I realized that the results of my methods of packing left much to be desired, for it is unquestionably annoying to discover, having reached the end of your journey, that a bottle of patent shoe dressing has emptied its sticky contents over your white flannel trousers, or that every dress shirt in your trunk has scraped acquaintance with your shoes. I have heard of persons who craftily wrap bottles in articles of attire so that they will neither break nor lose their stoppers, and who are able to bring a suit of clothes through a long

journey without a crease. Such things may be, but so far as I am concerned, the results are quite beyond me. Besides, such methods have always seemed to me petty and tricky. It is the inalienable privilege of a pair of trousers to get mussed, of a bottle of shoe dressing to lose its stopper if it can. I believe in putting everything in together and giving all an equal chance.

Tonight when, having completed my labors, I arose weary and perspiring to stretch the kinks out of my aching muscles, it burst upon me radiantly that, once married and with Aunt Amanda's seven hundred thousand in my possession, I need no longer pack my trunks; I could hire someone to do it for me! I believe that that fact alone would have decided me, had not the decision been already reached.

The next morning I arranged for the subletting of my rooms and sent my trunks away; one to the storage warehouse and one to Quinepog, Rhode Island. Then I went up to Jane's for luncheon and farewell.

I was disappointed in Jane that day. She was strangely unsympathetic and even scornful. Of course I realized that in making the selection of my future wife without consulting her I had given her cause for annoyance; but it seemed to me that she made too much of it. If Aunt Leigh hadn't come in just as she did, I think we should have quarreled in another minute. Aunt Leigh was sympathetic, and although she had never seen Miss Chayce, she was quite willing to credit that young lady with some merit; which Jane wasn't. Jane was—well, had it been anyone but Jane, I'd have said she was distinctly "catty."

"A pretty doll's face and a lot of yellow doll's hair!" scoffed Jane.

"Come now," I demurred, "it isn't fair to call hair like that yellow! It—it's like—like pale sunshine, sunshine on an April day, Jane." I was rather inclined to be proud of that. But Jane laughed irritatingly.

"Well, Jack, she certainly has gone to your head! To think of you—*you*—being poetical!"

"Oh, I don't know," I replied. "I've sometimes thought I might have done something in that line if I'd thought of it sooner."

"Well, if that's a sample, Jack, let's be glad you didn't think of it! Besides, if you admire yellow hair so much, you ought to go to the music halls. You'd find enough there, I'm sure, and a great deal prettier than Gladys Chayce's."

"Well, there's yellow hair and yellow hair," I remarked oracularly. "Now Miss Chayce—" but I stopped there. I've noticed that it won't do to tell a brunette that you admire a blonde, and vice versa. I wished now that I might have placed my choice on a brunette, for it was evident to me that Jane would never be more than barely decent to Miss Chayce unless the latter dyed her hair black or brown. And the realization that marriage with Miss Chayce would cut me off from Jane depressed me. I had, it seemed, hitherto entertained a hazy vision of the four of us, Jane and myself and Aunt Leigh and the future Mrs. John Addison Manton dwelling in peace and accord, and growing gracefully old together. But I saw now that such a thing was not to be. I felt rather sad about it. Jane saw my expression, but attributed it to another cause.

"Oh, please don't mind," she said ironically. "I quite realize that my approval or disapproval of the lady has nothing to do with it. You will marry whom you want. Our friendship gives me no right to interfere, but I will say, Jack—and I'd never forgive myself if I didn't—that you are making a terrible mistake, and that sooner or later you'll find it out!"

"I don't see," I said hopelessly, "why you need to go out of your way to dislike Miss Chayce. You say yourself that you don't know her."

"One doesn't have to know a girl like that, Jack," replied Jane pityingly, "to see that she is utterly superficial and inane."

"Oh, come now!" I protested.

"And you've no right to say that I dislike her," continued Jane warmly. "How can I, if I don't know her? Do

you think for one moment, Jack Manton, that if I thought she was the sort of person you ought to marry, that I'd say one word against her? No matter how much I disliked her? Do you? Answer me!"

"I know you're the best friend I've got," I replied sadly, "and I wish you'd see your way to helping me instead of just—just knocking."

"Knocking!" quoth Jane. "I'm trying to save you from a blunder and you call it 'knocking'!"

"Excuse me," I muttered with an attempt at humor, "but I thought I heard the sound of a hammer."

"Oh, if you think it's something to joke about, if my friendship is no more to you than—than—!"

"Oh, I say, Lady!"

"No, you've hurt me, Jack, and I never thought you could do it! I thought our friendship was—was sacred enough to—to—!"

I tried to take her hand, but she wouldn't let me. I'd never seen Jane quite so upset, or at least not in just such a way, and I was sort of bewildered.

"And now you let the first yellow-haired chit of a girl that takes your fancy come between us and spoil it all!"

"I didn't! I haven't!" I cried. "You know well enough that I don't care two-four-six for Gladys Chayce! You know that you'll always be the very first with me, old girl! Why—"

"Then you'll give it up, Jack?" she asked eagerly.

"Give it up?" I repeated, at a loss.

"Of course! Give up your—your infatuation for Gladys Chayce. You'd never be happy with her, Jack, never, never!"

"But it's got to be someone," I muttered. "And I don't see why it mightn't as well be her. Besides, I've sent my trunk down to Quinepog, and—"

"Very well," said Jane. "But let me tell you right now, Jack Manton, that I wash my hands of you this minute!"

"But you promised to help me!" I exclaimed.

"I didn't promise to help you make a fool of yourself!"

"I'm not making a fool of myself," I retorted huffily.

"You are!"

It was at this moment that Aunt Leigh entered. During luncheon Jane was very dignified and very silent, and Aunt Leigh, surmising that something was wrong, hurled herself into the breach and labored agitatedly in the interest of peace and good will. But it was an uncomfortable meal, and I was heartily glad when it was over. I said good-bye to Aunt Leigh, received her good wishes and held the door while she passed out of the drawing-room. Then I glanced at my watch and tried to look like a man in a hurry as I turned to Jane. Discretion is said to be the better part of valor, and I was all for getting away. To my surprise Jane had seated herself negligently in a corner of the couch and was smiling sweetly across at me. But I didn't like that smile. A person who didn't know Jane would have accepted it at its face value, but I knew better, knew that behind that smile Jane was a villain still. Flight was more attractive than ever.

"Well, I'll be running along, I guess," I said.

"Must you go?" asked Jane cheerfully. "Does it take long to reach this—this Quinepog place?"

"A couple of hours. The train goes at three, and I've got to stop around for my bag and clubs."

"Well, good-bye. I do hope you'll have a pleasant summer, Jack."

"Well, but—I say—I'm going to see you again soon, Jane?"

"Not very, I fear. We are going to visit the Miffins for a fortnight; we leave the last of next week. After that I don't know where we'll be."

"But you're going to write to me?"

"Don't be silly," said Jane sweetly.

"Silly! Why, aren't you? You always have."

"But it's different now, Jack. You'll find that Miss Chayce won't take kindly to your corresponding with a young widow, even one as little attractive as I."

"Don't talk rot!" I begged.

"Oh, but I mean it. Girls in love don't sympathize with the platonic friendship of their sweethearts. So I think, Jack, we'd better cut it out, don't you?"

"No, I don't!" I declared hotly.

"If Miss Chayce doesn't like it—"

"Careful, Jack!" laughed Jane, holding her finger up. "Don't say anything you'll be sorry for. We've been very good friends, my dear boy, but it had to stop some time, and the time has come. Of course, I don't want you to forget me entirely, Jack, and perhaps in the fall you'll drop in and see us for the sake of old times. We'll always be very glad to have you, auntie and I. Now don't lose your train."

"Darn my train!" I muttered.

"Look here, Jane, you're talking a whole lot of piffle and you know it. I don't see why my marrying Miss Chayce, or anyone else, need make any difference with us."

"Oh, don't you?" Jane opened her eyes very wide and smiled at me pityingly. "Then you soon will."

I stared down at her miserably. There were lots of things I could have said and wanted to say, but I couldn't put my tongue to them. Jane always could talk me into a corner. I knew that she was dead wrong about it, but I never was any good at repartee.

"If I'd known you were going to throw me over," I muttered, finally, "I'd never have gone in for the thing."

"Oh, yes, you would," answered Jane. "There never was a man yet who would sacrifice seven hundred thousand dollars for a woman's—friendship."

"Rot!" I growled. But even as I said it I was trembling in my boots for fear she'd put me to the test. There was a little silence. Then Jane laughed softly.

"Jack," she said, "you're as big a fraud as any of them."

"I'm not," I said, breathing easier.

"Oh, yes, you are. But I don't blame you. Seven hundred thousand dollars is a fortune, and a woman's friendship—why, Jack, when you get

your money you can buy all you want of that!"

"You're making me feel like a brute, Jane," I said. "You're all wrong; everything you've said is wrong. But I can't answer you; I never did have the gift of the gab. All I know is that you're the best friend I ever had, and I don't propose to give you up for all the wives in Christendom, and you're going to write to me during the summer, and I'm going to see you again very soon, and—and that's all there is to it!"

I ended up rather breathlessly. Jane didn't seem very much displeased; in fact, her smile was more like the real article as she answered:

"At least, I'll give you credit for meaning that now, Jack. Good-bye."

"And you will write to me?" I asked as we shook hands.

"We'll see," replied Jane.

"And you haven't thrown me over?"

"No, you silly boy, I haven't thrown you over, as you call it; but you mustn't look to me for any help in your matrimonial venture. I'm fairly good-natured, as you know, but—well, there are limits. In fact, Jack, instead of aiding you I'm not sure that I sha'n't—"

"Sha'n't what?" I asked.

"Nothing," replied Jane. "Good-bye. Don't lose your train. Think how disappointed the fair Gladys would be!"

I was somewhat down in the mouth for a while. Jane had come around after a fashion, but I knew very well that once I was married to Gladys Chayce it would be all over between Jane and me. And the thought was distinctly unpleasant. I had known Jane a long while; we were quite like brother and sister. And I was fond of Aunt Leigh. Giving them up would be like giving up my own family. I didn't quite see how I was going to get along without them.

And I hadn't played a very heroic part that day, either. I wished that I had been able to call Jane's bluff and say, "If getting that money means losing your friendship, why, the money may go hang!" I hadn't said it; I knew

I couldn't have said it; and it made me feel mean for a while. But presently, I argued, after all, Jane had been right; no man would give up that amount of money for the sake of friendship. And, besides, it wasn't necessary, anyhow. Jane would come around in time. She was a mighty good sort. By the time the train was well on its way to Quinepog I had recovered my spirits and was looking forward with mingled elation and excitement to the campaign ahead. I had twenty-four days left.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Campaign Is Begun

QUINEPOG BEACH is one of those sea-side places that set you wondering—wondering how anyone ever conceived the idea of making resorts of them. Quinepog Beach consists of a yellow hotel with a quarter of a mile of veranda, some two dozen cottages, one or two stores and a station. The beach is pebbly and steep, the ground is low and there aren't six trees to be found. The sun starts in earlier in the day than at any place I know of and keeps going longer. If it weren't for the breeze, which it is only fair to say works quite as hard as the sun and just as long hours, one couldn't live there. Hotel and cottages hug the beach, and the railroad runs along fifty yards inland, as though trying to crowd them into the ocean. Having seen the buildings, one can sympathize with the railroad in its endeavor. There is a good golf course, for a seaside course, and the greens are kept up in excellent shape. If it hadn't been for the links I fancy I'd have given up and returned to New York about the middle of the first week of my stay.

My room in the Quinepog Inn was on the third floor, and had nothing above it but a few inches of plaster and tin roofing. At four o'clock in the afternoon a reliable, self-respecting thermometer would have given up the struggle and died. The Inn, luckily for me, was one of those hosteleries where an unmarried, fairly prepossessing young

man can obtain "special rates." I even succeeded in doing better than that; as a golfer of national repute I was doubly welcome. A third was clipped from the special rate and the difference doubtless debited to "Golf Course Account."

The Inn was well filled, but I never saw such a collection of freaks and frumps. I'll bet a careful census would have shown ninety per cent of women over sixty-five. Once in a great while a man would put his head cautiously out the door, view with affright the long line of rocking, embroidering females and dodge out of sight again. If you went after him you'd find him either escaping by the back entrance, where the canned provisions came in, or drinking himself to death in the combination billiard-room and bar. Yes, I firmly believe that golf saved my reason during that first week—golf and the Milhams.

I reached Quinepog Saturday evening just before dinner, and Sunday morning I sought the Milhams' cottage. It was a chocolate-hued affair, with wide verandas around three sides of it, rather dismal in appearance, but hinting of comfort. And the comfort was there, too. I never saw a jollier house inside, although I've been in some pretty smart ones. It wasn't so much that the furnishings were expensive—I don't think they were—it was in the way they were arranged and the jolly look they had of being used. And they werenice folks, too—the Milhams. Mrs. Milham treated me like a long-lost son when I appeared Sunday morning, and the old gentleman, a fine, hearty chap of fifty-five or six, with an inclination toward portliness and a dread of it, almost wept on my neck. Daisy—that is, Miss Milham—seemed glad to see me, too, in her quiet way. I was surprised and dismayed to discover that Gladys Chayce was not there. Whether Daisy surmised the fact I don't know, but she took the first opportunity afforded by a pause in Mr. Milham's golf talk to inform me that Gladys and her mother were coming down the end of the week to spend a

month. That was reassuring, but I grew rather silent and inattentive trying to figure out my chance of doing four weeks' wooing in three. It was a handicap I hadn't expected. I aroused myself presently to find Mr. Milham gazing perplexedly, and Daisy quizzically, at me.

"I—I beg your pardon," I stammered. "I don't think I quite caught your last remark, sir."

"I was saying," responded Mr. Milham, "that if you liked we might try a few holes after dinner."

I hastened to assure him that there was nothing I'd like better. So I stayed to dinner—they had it at two on Sundays—and afterward Mr. Milham and I played eighteen holes, the former as proud as a turkey cock of being seen in play with me. The Milhams are the kind of people that won't let you keep on ceremony with them, and after tea at the Inn—the standard Sunday evening meal at the seaside: broiled lobsters, cold meats, stale cake and canned fruit—I went back to the chocolate-hued cottage and sat on the porch and helped the family fight mosquitoes until Daisy commanded my services inside in the preparation of some enticing mixture of oysters and eggs in the chafing dish. I was ravenously hungry—tea at the Inn had been a sorry reward for eighteen holes—and I think my liking for Daisy Milham commenced then and there.

It's up to me to own that during the next five days I didn't behave at all like a lover shorn of his lady's presence. Daisy and I got on together capitally. She was the sort of girl a fellow likes to be with—sensible, full of quiet humor, not afraid of hurting her complexion and always ready to do something. She was the sort of girl that doesn't demand constant admiration, that you don't have to make love to all the time. We fished together, and bathed together, and played golf together, and I found she wasn't half the duffer she had professed being. She had a good swing, wasn't afraid to "let herself out," and I quite enjoyed teaching her. She could talk, too, and we had many a jolly

hour in the corner of the broad veranda behind the clematis, punctuating and italicizing our remarks with blows at elusive mosquitoes. On Wednesday there was an informal hop at the Inn. The Milhams, following the example of the other cottagers, attended, and I had three dances with Daisy and found that she could dance as well as she could play golf. Thursday I disappeared for the afternoon and went over to Quinepog village. I had given the Milhams the impression that my reason for being at Quinepog Beach was the necessity of attending to affairs relative to my aunt's estate, and I thought it well to make the bluff. The little white cottage, with its green blinds and sentinel lilac trees in front, was closed tight, and after wandering around the yard for a while, striving dutifully to feel sad and sentimental, I came away and trudged back to the Inn.

Of course a chap can't be seen in company with the same girl for five days on end, especially at a summer resort, without awakening speculation, and I soon observed that when Daisy and I appeared on the links or the beach together Eyelet Embroidery whispered to Hardinger and Hardinger passed on the word to Shadow, and in a moment the whole line of busy, censorious old dames was sputtering and spying. For myself I didn't care a rap, naturally enough, and it didn't seem to worry Daisy any, but I noticed that Mrs. Milham was getting uneasy and so I concluded that it might be a good plan to let up a little on my attentions. By this time I had made a good many acquaintances and found myself quite a personage. Whenever I started around there was always a gallery with me, flattering but bothersome. And on the hotel news-stand there appeared one day as though by magic two copies of "A First Book of Golf." Such is fame. It might have proved hard work keeping away from the Milhams, however, if it hadn't been that on Friday I was requested to take up the arrangements for a handicap tournament. That gave me something to do, and it wasn't until Saturday eve-

ning that I got over to the chocolate cottage again.

Mrs. Chayce and her daughter had arrived in the afternoon, and I was presented to the mother. Mrs. Chayce was a very handsome woman, and must have been a beauty as a girl. Even without the artificial aids to beauty which she borrowed and employed with discretion, she would have attracted notice anywhere. She was rather large, full-figured and carried herself well. Her hair was dark and more than sprinkled with gray, and instead of adding to her apparent age rather detracted from it. I admired her immensely at first sight, and found myself wondering whether I hadn't made a mistake in placing my choice on the daughter instead of the mother. Somehow, Gladys didn't seem so attractive this evening, but doubtless she was fagged and tired from her journey. She was the sort of girl that doesn't take kindly to physical exertion; and I might add mental, too, for that matter. She received me very graciously, allowing her hand to remain in mine for just that added moment that marks the distinction between a greeting and a welcome.

They were arranging for bridge when I arrived, and when I refused to interfere with the arrangements already made, Mrs. Chayce gave her place to Daisy and bore me off to the mosquito-haunted veranda. During the next hour she set herself the task of captivating me, and I tried equally hard to install myself in her good graces, with the result that when we parted we were quite the best of friends and I was congratulating myself on the success of the evening. One thing I discovered, which possibly threw some light on the lady's amiability, and that was the fact that I was popularly supposed to have inherited Aunt Amanda's entire fortune, which had miraculously increased to "about a million." Mrs. Chayce had heard of no conditions, and I mentioned none to her. That could come later. I managed to hold Gladys's hand again at parting, and I am quite sure that she didn't resent the slight

pressure I bestowed upon it. I went back to the Inn well pleased with myself and the prospect, and, seeking the billiard-room, drank success to my undertaking. It was only when I had reached the bottom of my second high-ball that I recalled the disquieting fact that only twenty-one days remained to me!

CHAPTER EIGHT

Daisy Milham Advises

I HAVE no intention of following the campaign in detail. In fact, during the succeeding week little occurred that would bear setting down in this narrative. I was very busy. The golf tournament, which was set for Friday and Saturday, took up several hours every day. I spent eight hours out of every twenty-four in bed and was obliged to waste perhaps two more at table. Perhaps thirteen of the twenty-four were so disposed of, leaving me but eleven in which to devote myself to Miss Chayce. Eleven multiplied by twenty-one made two hundred and thirty-one, and two hundred and thirty-one hours in which to persuade a young lady, hitherto a practical stranger, that it was necessary to her happiness that she marry me out of hand, so to speak, seemed sadly inadequate. Nor at the end of the first week could I see that I had made much progress. To be sure, Miss Gladys had plainly accepted me as a suitor, and I had her mother strongly on my side, but whatever Miss Chayce's private intentions were—if she had any—it was evident that she didn't mean to be hurried, but demanded a full measure of wooing. And goodness knows I didn't have time for it! Under other conditions I might have been willing to play the part in detail, as well as I knew how, for I confess that Miss Chayce was well worth making love to, and that when I could forget for a moment the exigency of the case I was able to throw myself into the task with enthusiasm and positive enjoyment. But whenever the occasion

demanding close attention and at least a semblance of ardor, the disturbing thought "Only eighteen days left!" or "Fourteen days more!" as the case may have been, descended upon me like a wet blanket, my tongue faltered and I failed to score.

During that first week I taught her golf—I had entered into a conspiracy with Daisy Milham to that end—and I took her sailing. I got up a picnic on Thursday and carried two autos full of folks to Cheney's Point, where we ate clams and lobsters on the hot beach and narrowly escaped sunstroke and dyspepsia. I gave teas galore on the porch of the club house and, with the help of others, arranged a dance at the Inn for Saturday night. In short, I did all that the mortal mind of man could devise for the entertainment of Miss Gladys and, incidentally, I made my bank account look senile and infirm. It was an unpleasant fact that, while I might have seven hundred thousand dollars next month, today I had to count the pennies as never before. And when the dance came to an end Saturday night and I sat in my pajamas at the window of my room smoking a good-night pipe, I couldn't see that I was any further along than I had been two weeks before. Eighteen days had got past me and I had nothing to show for them! In desperation I seized pen and paper and wrote to Jane. What I said I don't know. I was desperate for advice, assistance and encouragement. I filled five sheets of paper, ending with a plaintive wail of "Can't you come and help me, Lady?"

Then I drearily crossed off another figure on the calendar above the chiffonier, counted the remaining days in the forlorn hope that I might be in error, found only fourteen, and crept dejectedly into bed.

It was on Monday that, passing through the dark corridor on the way to luncheon, I passed a figure which even in that depressing twilight looked strangely familiar. I turned and followed it until it gained the light. Then I tapped it on the shoulder and held out my hand.

"Hello, Roulard! What are you doing here?" I asked.

Christopher Roulard seemed embarrassed, I thought, as he muttered something about being down for a little golf. "Golf, indeed!" thought I. "It begins with a G, but it doesn't spell golf!" But I accepted his explanation at face value, and we chatted a moment about the links. He didn't look happy, poor chap. If it was true that he was in love with Gladys Chayce he doubtless looked on me with anything but favor. Perhaps some rumor of how affairs stood here at Quinepog had filtered to the city and Chris had come down to see for himself. He was a nice boy and a handsome one. The only trouble with him was that he was as poor as a church mouse and had no prospects of ever being otherwise. I felt sorry for him and I was as nice as I knew how to be. I fancy he had come down prepared to thoroughly dislike me, but I took the wind out of his sails.

"Had luncheon?" I asked.

He nodded gloomily. The gloom might have been at recollection of the viands.

"Well," I said, "I'll see you again. How about a little golf this afternoon?"

He brightened at that.

"I'd like it," he said, "but I'm such a duffer you don't want to take me on."

"Duffer nothing!" I said heartily. "I've seen you play. But I'll give you a handicap if you like. What do you say?"

He agreed.

"All right. Meet me at the club house at five. I'd make it earlier, but I've promised to go around once with Miss Milham and Miss Chayce. Do you know them?"

He stood the mention of her name beautifully; there was just a flicker of an eyelash and that was all.

"I've met Miss Chayce," he said.

"But—well, the old lady and I don't get on." He smiled ruefully. "I'm not on their visiting list."

"Well, I'll meet you at five, then," I said. "So long."

But when I got to the links at three Chris was already on hand. I saw

him leaning disconsolately against a post at the end of the porch. I think Miss Chayce saw him, too, for she stopped in the middle of a denunciation of walking as a means of exercise and stared past me. And when she began again she'd skipped several sentences, I fancy; anyhow, there wasn't any sense to what she said. When we met again on the porch and walked over to the first tee Chris was still there, but he wasn't looking our way, I noticed. Miss Chayce seemed a bit *distract* and would have driven off with a goose-neck putter if I hadn't stopped her. She managed to pull her ball fifty yards to the left of the course on a short drive; and whether it was the discouragement of such a poor start that affected her or whether she was really tired I can't say, but at the third hole she begged Daisy and me to go on without her, protesting that she much preferred to rest.

"I'll go over there under the apple trees," she announced, "and meet you coming back. Don't you think it's awfully warm?"

We agreed that it was, offered to give up playing and finally, when she would not consent to that, went on and left her, taking her caddy along.

Half an hour later when we reached the orchard on the way back, Miss Chayce was not to be seen.

"She's probably gone back to the club house," said Daisy. "Gladys feels the heat a good deal."

"A veil isn't quite the thing to play golf in," I observed dryly. "I should think she'd suffocate."

"Gladys burns very easily," answered Daisy. "Is my grip all right?"

"Too tight, too rigid," I instructed. "In putting try to hold the club firmly but delicately. That's better. You topped a little, though. Too bad. Put it in."

"I think," said Daisy when we were at the tee and I was hunting for moist sand, "I think that's Gladys on the porch."

I looked.

"It is. Do you know who that is with her?"

Daisy hesitated a moment.

"I think it's a man, but it's so far—"

"It's young Roulard, Chris Roulard. Ever met him?"

Daisy shook her head, throwing a little glance of inquiry at me.

"He's a nice boy," I said. "May I introduce him when we get back?"

Daisy viewed me with a hint of perplexity. Finally:

"I wonder how much you know," she mused.

"About Chris and Miss Chayce?"

Daisy nodded.

"Only that he is supposed to be an admirer of hers and that her mother objects to him, presumably on the score of poverty. Is there any more to know?"

"And you don't mind?" asked Daisy.

"Mind what?"

"That." She nodded toward the distant couple in the shade of the club house porch.

"Why should I mind?" I asked calmly.

"You must be very conceited, then."

"How do you make that out?"

"Why, if the appearance of a rival in the field doesn't trouble you," answered Daisy gaily, "you must have a very good idea of your own powers of attraction."

"Not at all," I said. "If Chris Roulard and I started from scratch I've no doubt he'd win easily. But he's badly handicapped."

"You mean—?"

"Lack of money."

"But if she cared for him?"

"Well?"

Daisy and I looked at each other.

"I don't think that's nice of you," she said presently.

"Well, what do you think?" I asked.

"I think—oh, I don't know!" We laughed. "I do think, though, that there's more to Gladys than you give her credit for."

"She's a very charming, very attractive young lady," I said. "But I think that she is also—er—sensible."

"Meaning mercenary!"

"No, really; just sensible."

"I wouldn't advise you to trust too

greatly to Gladys's good sense," murmured Daisy a trifle defiantly. "I know if I were Gladys—"

"You'd rather starve with Chris than have dyspepsia with me," I laughed. Daisy made a face.

"You'd have to make love better than you're doing now," she answered.

"But I haven't been making love to you," I protested.

"I mean to Gladys, and you know it."

"Oh! Well, I thought I'd been doing fairly well. I've just about lived at your house. I've done about everything I could think of to—er—entertain her. I've—"

"Do you suppose for a minute that you can win a girl by *entertaining* her?" asked Daisy scornfully.

"Oh! Er—well, what would you advise?" I asked insinuatingly.

"You'll not be angry if I tell you?"

"Have you ever seen me angry in the course of our lifelong acquaintance?"

"N-no, but I think you could be angry if you wanted to."

"Really? Be assured that I have no desire to today; it's far too warm. So tell me, please."

"Well, I'd advise you to give it up."

"Oh, but I can't!" I cried. "That's impossible! I'd like to oblige you, but—"

"I don't ask you to do it to oblige me," said Daisy coldly.

"Of course not," I murmured apologetically.

"I mean for your own sake. Because I think—I think you're going to be disappointed." Daisy was looking across at the club house and my gaze followed hers.

"You think, then, that—er—?"

"I think she cares for him," replied Daisy quietly.

"But surely she couldn't marry him!" I exclaimed. "Why, her mother—"

"I know. But girls have married before this without their mothers' consent, Mr. Manton. Besides, if she does care for Mr. Roulard, surely you wouldn't want her to marry you."

"Oh," I said lamely, "wouldn't I?"

"Would you?"

"Well, I wouldn't want to have her marry me against her inclinations, but I think she will realize that young Roulard is quite impossible."

"You'd be willing, then, to have her, even if you knew that she cared for another man and was marrying you just for your money?" asked Daisy, scornfully incredulous. "I don't believe you really love her!"

"Just what is Love?" I asked.

"It isn't that," she said shortly.

"Love," I began glibly—

"We will now have an exposition on Love by an old bachelor," remarked Daisy, addressing the head of her driver. We had seated ourselves on the sand box and were waiting for a foursome to come up and pass us.

"Oh, come now!" I objected. "I'm only twenty-nine; or—say thirty," I added, recollecting that rapidly approaching birthday."

"Really? You seem much older."

Ten years ago that would have pleased me; today I found myself resenting it.

"Do I? I suppose I'm quite a Methuselah to you," I said, admiring the round brown arms that held her driver. She shook her head.

"No," she answered, "but twenty-nine—"

"Say thirty," I interrupted gloomily. "It's only two weeks."

"Seems quite old. You know Gladys is only nineteen."

"Just right," I said cheerfully.

"Ten years, you know, is the ideal—"

"Oh, no, it isn't," she protested. "Youth ought to wed with youth. Three years is quite difference enough. A young girl doesn't want to marry a man that's old and disillusioned."

"So you think I'm old and disillusioned, do you?"

"I thought," replied Daisy, "that it was only women who insisted on the personal application."

"What does that mean?"

"That we weren't discussing you in particular, but men in general."

"Oh, were we? You mean you were. But, I say, you aren't very encouraging, you know. I think you might

help me instead of throwing cold water on me."

"If I thought you really loved Gladys perhaps I would help you," said Daisy quietly.

"And if I assure you that I do?"

"Then I'll do what I can—if you assure me. But you won't, you can't." She gazed very straightly at me. I opened my lips, closed them again and finally said:

"Do you know you've got ripping eyes?"

The ripping eyes dropped and a faint flush crept into the brown cheeks.

"We were not discussing my eyes," said Daisy severely.

"But don't you think we might?" I asked.

"I think if we don't go on we'll miss our tea."

"That would be a crime," I murmured. "It's your drive."

When we reached the club house we found Gladys looking through a magazine on the porch and Chris Roulard playing clock golf with himself thirty yards away. I smiled at Daisy, but she seemed to miss the joke. I called to Chris and asked him to join us at tea, but he muttered an excuse. The porch was filling up and perhaps he was wise, for I've no doubt he was quite willing that Mrs. Chayce should remain in ignorance of his presence at Quinepog.

After tea Daisy and Gladys drove home in somebody's automobile and Chris and I started off. He wasn't a good player at the best, and today he outdid himself in committing every sin in the golfing decalogue; so that at the fifth hole, in spite of his handicap, he was badly out of the running. He realized that he owed me an apology and tendered it, complaining that the heat had rather done him up and offering to quit if I wanted to. But I said we'd finish the round; that probably we'd get in before moonrise. That seemed to put him on his mettle, for he made some fine drives and a couple of good shots with the iron. But on the greens he was miserable, dawdling around like—well, like a man in love. We walked back to the inn together

and I persuaded him to get a seat at my table. He was a nice boy and I couldn't help liking him and being a little bit sorry for him. After all, even if I was to marry the girl he was in love with, there was no reason why I shouldn't be decent to him meanwhile. And I believe he had enough common sense to realize the fact. At all events he seemed grateful and glad to chum with me, and we got on very well together for the rest of our stay. After dinner I set out for the Milhams', determined to profit by Daisy's criticism and force the running.

CHAPTER NINE

I Propose

SOMETHING ought to be done about this game of Bridge. I realize that I have written the word with a capital B and beyond a doubt the proof reader will query it. I acknowledge now that I can find no authority for it. My publishers, shortly after the acceptance of my first book, very kindly sent me a copy of a little brochure entitled "Suggestions to Our Authors," which contains, among other things, explicit directions in regard to the use of italics, punctuation, capitals and so on. Strangely enough, the word Bridge is not mentioned. But nevertheless I maintain that Bridge is a capital offense, that players should receive capital punishment, and that, consequently, the word should be spelled with a capital B. I think that is logic. Anyway it sounds like it.

When I reached the Milhams' that evening my advent was hailed with enthusiasm. I was just in time to make the fourth. I demurred, pointing out that Daisy was a much better player than I; that I felt especially stupid this evening; that I had offended so greatly the last time that I was certain Mrs. Milham wouldn't want me for a partner. But Mrs. Milham assured me that I was quite wrong, Daisy informed me that she had a headache and Mr. Milham poo-hoed every remonstrance.

I sat down opposite Mrs. Milham, trying to look like a happy man, and inwardly reviling Bridge and its devotees.

I acknowledge that I am a poor player, and I am convinced that I always will be. Mr. Milham, on the other hand, is a past master at it, and found a deal of satisfaction in taking tricks which rightly belonged to me. His air said quite as plainly as words: "You may be able to make me look small on the links, sir, but at the Bridge table I have you quite at my mercy." The gentle, kindly way in which, after each hand, he pointed out the mistakes I had committed was extremely exasperating.

Daisy went upstairs to bed in the middle of the evening, while Miss Gladys, after watching the game a little longer and striving to conceal her yawns, wandered out on the porch. For a while I could glimpse her white dress through the open window. Then it disappeared. After the second rubber, which an unkind fate awarded to Mrs. Milham and me, so requiring a third series, I arose to empty the ash tray in the fireplace. As I passed the door I fancied I could see the blur of a white gown down at the gate. The hydrangeas, however, were coming into bloom, and I may have been mistaken. Mr. Milham and Mrs. Chayce won the deciding rubber, and as it was then after eleven I could only say good night and take my departure.

"I wonder," said Mrs. Chayce, as I shook hands with her, "where Gladys is?"

"I think she is on the porch," I replied. "I will look and see."

Rather to my surprise she was there, sitting in the hammock. I made an appointment for bathing in the morning, restored her to her anxious parent and took my departure. Just before I reached the hotel I overtook Chris Roulard, strolling along in the starlight.

"Hello!" said I. "You're out late."

He yawned loudly.

"I've been taking a walk," he replied. "Not much to see around here, is there?"

"N-no," I answered, "but it's rather pretty at night, I think. I wonder if you noticed the Milhams' hydrangeas. They're beginning to make quite a show."

He said he didn't think he had. I think he told the truth.

The first thought that penetrated into my consciousness the next morning was that I had but eleven days left. Panic-stricken, I leaped out of bed, dressed hurriedly, ate a miserable breakfast in record time and then, recalling the fact that my engagement with Miss Gladys was for eleven o'clock and that it still lacked an hour of that time, I found Chris and played two strings of billiards. He had no difficulty with me, for I was away off my game. I suppose he thought I was crazy at first, for every time I went to score my little runs of five or six I'd put up eleven. I was kept busy correcting and apologizing.

"Stupid of me," I explained. "The fact is I have an engagement at eleven and the figure seems to have got on my brain."

"It must be important," he said idly, taking three cushions and clicking merrily.

"Well, it's to go in bathing with Miss Chayce," I said.

Chris missed a simple carom and swore like a trooper.

"Hard luck," I murmured. "Have you tried the bathing yet?"

He hadn't brought his suit, he said; in fact, he had come prepared for only a couple of days. But he rather liked the place now and might stay longer. "It sort of grows on you, Manton."

"If it grows on me I'll have an operation," I responded flippantly, completing a marvelous run of four and checking an impulse to score eleven. "Perhaps you can borrow a suit somewhere," I suggested. "You might ask the clerk. Summer hotel clerks are supposed always to have bathing suits, dress clothes and white ties to lend."

He said maybe he would.

Daisy's headache still held good, and Gladys and I went down to the beach together. She wasn't much on actual

bathing, but she looked stunning in a dark blue suit with a panel effect down the front and a bunch of plaits. She wore a crimson belt, linen collar and cuffs, a crimson tie and black stockings. She was the swellest thing on the beach, and for her sake I wished I presented a more heroic appearance in my bathing attire. By half past eleven the beach was quite well filled and Miss Gladys was the cynosure of all eyes—a hackneyed but apt expression. It wasn't long before I spied Chris. He was rather tall, and broad of hip and shoulder—altogether a fine figure of a man. Unfortunately the suit he had borrowed—and recollecting the physique of our bland and obliging clerk, I was certain it belonged to him—was much too scant in all parts, and Chris looked like a chrysalis bursting from its cocoon. I thought that rather a clever simile and mentioned it to Miss Gladys. She seemed only mildly amused, but then she was not the sort of girl that has "spasms."

"You know Chris Roulard, don't you?" I asked idly.

"Yes, I've —met him."

"A nice boy," I went on. I wasn't exactly looking at her, but I could catch the swift glance thrown at me. "Too bad he has no money."

"Is it?" asked Miss Gladys, indifferently.

We were sitting in the deep sand watching the bathers and listening to the terrified and ecstatic squeals of the women attacked by an eight-inch wave.

"Don't you think so?" I asked, rolling over on my elbow so I could see her face. "If he had some money he could marry a nice girl and be happy with her. But as it is—" I shrugged my shoulders sadly.

"Can't he make money?" asked Miss Gladys.

"I suppose so—in time. But few girls nowadays are willing to wait for a chap when the outcome is so uncertain. The present generation of girls is rather sensible in regard to matrimony, don't you think?"

"I don't know," said Miss Gladys. "How do you mean, Mr. Manton?"

"Well, I mean that they seem to realize that they haven't been brought up to enjoy love in a cottage, and so are sensible enough not to try the experiment."

"Don't you think lots of marriages without money are happy?" she asked, looking up the beach toward where Chris was hovering in the offing.

"Oh, yes, but a girl has to be constituted a certain way to be happy with poverty. Most of them aren't. You take a girl who has had all she wants all her life and let her marry a chap who can't give her more than necessities, and not all of those, and the romance soon rubs off."

"But so many rich marriages don't turn out happily," said Miss Gladys.

"That's because the parties aren't suited to each other. Those people wouldn't be happy together, poor or rich, under any circumstances. At least, that's my theory, Miss Gladys."

She made no answer. The little waves had joined in a chorus, and what they sang was, "Eleven days more! Eleven days more!" I took my courage in hand, lowered my eyes from her face so that her loveliness wouldn't frighten me into silence and plunged.

"Miss Gladys," I said, "perhaps it is rather too soon to speak of this; you haven't known me very long, and I don't dare hope that you care for me the least bit; but I can't keep silent any longer. I want you to marry me. Don't answer me now, please. Think it over."

A brief glance at her face showed that she had no intention of answering me. Her eyes were wide and dismayed looking, but—and I noted the fact with satisfaction—they were no longer fixed on Chris Roulard.

"I want you to try to care for me," I went on, warming to my work. "You deserve a better man, but I am sure you could never find one more devoted, one more able and eager to make you happy." I reached out for her hand and she let me take it. It lay in mine, a cool, white, bejeweled little thing, passive and inert. But to me it stood for a lot, and at the realization of the

fact my fingers closed about it with a very good simulation of passion. I was holding seven hundred thousand dollars, and the waves were chanting, "Eleven days more! Eleven days more!"

"I am not very wealthy," I went on earnestly, "as wealth is judged nowadays, but with the better part of a million we can live very comfortably, very happily. You can have anything you want and there's nothing I won't be glad to get you. I haven't dwelt very much on the side of affection, for I realize that you have known me but a short time and cannot have learned to care for me yet. But I think—pardon me if it sounds conceited—I think I could win your love, Miss Gladys, in time. I am not repellent to you?" I ended anxiously.

She was staring out to sea, a flush in her cheeks and a troubled light in her sweet eyes. At my question she shook her head slowly.

"I—I like you," she said in a whisper, "but—but—"

"No, please not now!" I interrupted. "Think it over. Talk it over with your mother; let me have my answer later. Today is Tuesday. May I come to you Saturday? Will you tell me then?"

She nodded again.

"Thank you," I said gratefully. "I won't bother you meanwhile nor, now that I have had my say, attempt to influence you further. You must do as your heart dictates. Your happiness is the main thing, not mine. Shall we go back?"

I helped her up and we walked across to the cottage in silence. I left her at the gate after a handshake and a simple, "Till Saturday," and made my way to the hotel bath house feeling as though a load had been lifted from my mind. The waves still kept up their gentle clamor, but its burden no longer disturbed me. I had taken the plunge and had no doubt but that I should emerge triumphant from the sea of doubt and suspense. Pleased with the metaphor, I broke into song as I dressed, and later, still humming,

walked up the steps of the veranda almost into the arms of Jane.

CHAPTER TEN

Jane Takes Command

OF course I was surprised. I had been wondering why Jane had not replied to my frenzied appeal for help, but it had not occurred to me that she might appear without warning.

"Jack," she laughed, "if you don't let go of my hand they'll think we're engaged."

"I don't care what they think, the old frumps!" I replied. "I'm terribly glad to see you, Lady. When did you come, and—and—"

"Take me somewhere where I sha'n't feel as though I had stumbled by accident into a sewing circle," said Jane, with a shuddering glance at the attentive audience lining the veranda, "and I will tell you all."

I guided her around the corner to a spot which, because of occasional snatches of ribald laughter, the clicking of the billiard balls and the tinkle of glasses which came through the window, was carefully avoided by the rocking-chair crowd. As we passed from sight I could hear—no, *feel*—the sibilant gust of gossip that swept along the line. I pulled a chair into the shade and perched myself on the railing and beamed down at her. She certainly looked good. There never was a woman who could wear her clothes the way Jane can. Today she had on a plain black gown with linen collar and cuffs and a lace jabot. It was all simple enough for a lady's maid, but Jane looked like a princess. Her hat seemed about seven feet across in the widest place. It was black straw, sort of flopsy, with a white scarf bunched around it, and it suited her to a T. She was looking remarkably well even for Jane, and there was a bunch of color in each cheek that would have made a pink rose green with envy. Jane laughed softly.

"Well?" she said.

"I never saw you looking lovelier!" I exclaimed admiringly.

"Really?" she asked, smiling up at me. "If you're not careful you'll make me blush."

"You don't need to; your cheeks now are—"

"Jack," she laughed, "what's got into you? I never knew you to be so complimentary."

"I'm just glad to see you, I guess," said I. "And it certainly was good of you to come. When I didn't get any answer to that letter I thought—"

"That I'd washed my hands of you again? My dear Jack, a letter such as that of yours would wring pity from a—from an anchorite. What is an anchorite, Jack?"

"An anchorite? Don't you know what that is? Why—er—an anchorite is a small—er—a small crustacean that lives on anchors."

"Silly!"

"I give you my word!" I'd have sworn to anything, it was so jolly to have Jane back. "It's a kind of barnacle that—"

"I suppose barnacles live on barns," said Jane flippantly. "But let me tell you. I didn't get your letter until yesterday, for auntie and I left the Miffins' Saturday and went to Shelter Island, and you know how careless folks are about forwarding one's mail! It came yesterday noon and I read parts of it to auntie. Poor dear, she was quite upset and insisted that you were ill and out of your head!"

"Bad as that, was it?" I asked. Jane nodded.

"It *did* sound as though you might have been either wandering in your mind, or—or—"

"I was quite sober," I assured her. "But that letter was written under—er—great stress, and—frankly, I haven't much idea what I said in it!"

"Well, you said enough to worry auntie and to bring me post-haste. She wanted me to come yesterday, and made me promise that, in case you were ill, I'd bring you right up to town. I was to telegraph her and she was to hurry back and open the house."

"I don't see why you folks want to be so darned good to me," I muttered.

"Don't be silly! Auntie was afraid it was typhoid. She said she was sure you'd been eating oysters; you know, she has theories about oysters and typhoid."

I nodded. I had heard them.

"Well, I started this morning at"—Jane lowered her voice impressively—"half . . . past . . . six!"

"You never did!"

"I did, actually! At half past six! Now, wasn't I good, Jack Manton?"

"You're a brick, Lady. I suppose it was a lot cooler traveling early in the day."

"Jack!"

"No, I didn't mean it that way; honest!" I protested. "I was only glad that you had come when it was most comfortable, Jane."

"Well, that did have something to do with it," she laughed. "But I'd have come just the same if it had been as hot as Tophet. What's Tophet, Jack?"

I grinned and shook my head.

"It—it's like that other thing, only you can't eat it," I said.

"Thanks," said Jane gratefully. "I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have you to dispel my ignorance. Now tell me what has happened, Jack. How goes the conquest of the fair Gladys?"

I told her everything, bringing my narrative strictly down to date.

"Then, while I was impatiently awaiting you here on this beastly piazza, you were proposing marriage to her," mused Jane sadly. "Do you think that's nice, Jack?"

"If I'd known you were here, all the proposals in the world wouldn't have kept me away, Jane!"

Jane shook her head and sighed skeptically.

"I don't see but that I might just as well have stayed away and spared myself a most uncomfortable journey," she said. "You seem to have got beyond the need of assistance."

"Beyond it! I'm just where I need all that's coming," I said. "How do I know whether she'll have me or not?"

And even if she accepts me, how the dickens am I to persuade her to marry me before the sixteenth? She'll think I'm daffy!"

"You must tell her all about it," answered Jane. "When she knows that if she doesn't marry you by that time you won't get your money I fancy she'll see her way to humoring you. Besides, Jack, there's the mother."

I nodded.

"Yes, I'd thought of that," I said.

"You say she's been agreeable?"

"As nice as pie," I answered. "If there were only Mrs. Chayce—"

"I think there is only Mrs. Chayce," said Jane. "I think you'll find that what Mrs. Chayce says 'goes' with daughter. But I can see that this situation requires careful handling, and I'm glad I came. Leave it all to me, Jack."

I stared.

"Well, but—look here, Jane, isn't this a sudden reversal of form? A couple of weeks ago you wouldn't touch the affair with a ten-foot pole."

"My dear Jack, haven't you learned yet that no woman can be supposed to have the same mind three days running? For all you know, I may have changed my mind a dozen times since you saw me last."

"And how do I know you won't change it again tomorrow?"

"I sha'n't," she replied serenely. "It's all settled now. I've been thinking it over, Jack, I'm going to help you to win your fortune."

"You're awfully decent to me, Jane," I said gratefully. Jane paid no heed.

"About this Mr. Roulard—" she said. "You really think that he's in love with her?"

"Sure of it. You have only to see him play golf."

"And she?" asked Jane.

I hesitated. "I think she's gone on him," I answered finally. "Daisy Milham says so. And it looks that way to me, too."

"And you think he's seeing her clandestinely?"

"Well, something of the sort."

"And she's to give you her answer Saturday?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Now we know where we stand. After luncheon I'll go over and call on the Milhams."

"I'll go along."

"No, you'll stay here or play golf until about four. Then you may take me driving. I suppose one can drive here?"

"If you don't mind the rigs," I replied. "But don't you think I'd better go along to the Milhams'?"

"I do not," said Jane decisively. "You've agreed not to bother Gladys while she is making up her mind, so you must stay away. I think about one call between now and Saturday will be enough; say Thursday evening."

"Well, you know best. But look here, what are you going to do about accommodations? Have you seen them at the office? I heard yesterday that every room was taken."

"I'm all fixed. They talked some nonsense at first, but I didn't pay any attention to them. I just told them I had to have two rooms and bath on the first floor and there was no use arguing."

"And you got them?" I asked admiringly. Jane lifted a pair of surprised black eyes to mine.

"Did you ever know me to fail to get what I wanted, Jack?"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Gladys Capitulates

EVENTS shaped themselves rapidly after Jane's arrival. She took entire command of the situation, and all I had to do was to obey orders. It was a relief to know that the die was cast, that come what might, I had managed the campaign thus far with consummate skill; and it was a relief to have someone else do the worrying for a while. I threw off all sense of responsibility, played golf and billiards with Chris Roulard, drove with Jane, and in spare moments tried to decide between the

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claims of eight different makes of motor cars. (I was already spending in anticipation the first fifty thousand of Aunt Amanda's estate.) Jane was very chary of information; all my questions elicited the same answer:

"Jack, you must let me do this my own way. And you mustn't bother me with questions. If there's anything you ought to know I'll tell you. Go and play golf."

So I went and played golf. I had all the confidence in the world in Jane. Thursday evening I accompanied her to the Milhams' and soon saw that she had the situation there well under control. She had made a conquest of both Mrs. Chayce and Miss Gladys, and it was all I could do to get a word with the latter, so taken up was she with Jane. Miss Gladys was inclined to be embarrassed with me, but I soon let her see that I had no intention of talking other than platitudes. Mrs. Milham and Jane were old friends, and Mr. Milham spent as much of his time as possible hanging over the back of Jane's chair. He rather got on my nerves; I hate to see a man of his age cutting up like a two-year-old. Daisy alone seemed not to have fallen under Jane's spell. Mrs. Chayce was charming to me. On the whole the evening was a success, I thought, and I ventured to say as much to Jane as we walked back to the Inn. But Jane was silent and *distract*. She let me babble on for a while and then said shortly, "Please be still, Jack. I want to think."

On the hotel veranda we encountered Chris. I spoke and was for going on when Jane whispered, "Present him, Jack." I obeyed. We talked together for a minute, the three of us, and then Jane said:

"Won't you keep me company for a while, Mr. Roulard? Jack is such a sleepyhead and insists on going right to bed. I'm sure it's quite early yet, isn't it?"

"Well, look here—" I began. But Jane silenced me with a glance.

"Run along to bed, Jack. Mr. Roulard will look after me."

I don't know whether Chris or I

looked the more surprised. We each tried to dissemble; Chris muttered something about being awfully pleased, and I ostentatiously stifled a yawn and said good night. At the door I looked back. Jane was piloting him to the darkest stretch of the veranda. I made my way to the billiard-room to meditate upon the eccentricities of Jane.

The next morning when I looked for Chris he was not to be found. Neither was Jane. Cheated of my billiards, I wandered down to the beach and found them side by side under an umbrella. It may have been imagination, but I really fancied that they each resented my intrusion. Later, when I suggested golf to Chris, he hesitated and looked bothered until Jane came to his rescue:

"Mr. Roulard is going to take me out sailing this afternoon, Jack. But if you and he have already made arrangements for golf I'll let him off."

Chris denied emphatically that he had any engagement with me. That was a fact, but I thought he needn't have shown so much enthusiasm about it. They went off together right after luncheon and I didn't see them again until dinner time, when I found that Chris had been moved to the table I had been sharing with Jane.

"What's the program for this evening?" I asked as we left the dining-room together.

"Mr. Roulard and I are going to call on the Milhams," replied Jane, adding meaningly, "I suppose you don't care to come along?"

"What!" I exclaimed. Chris muttered an excuse and sought the cigar counter. "Look here, Jane," I said, "you can't do that! Why, Mrs. Chayce would throw a fit."

"Leave it to me, Jack," replied Jane placidly. "Mr. Roulard is a friend of mine, and I am not supposed to know anything about how he stands with the Chayces. I am merely taking him to call on the Milhams. Besides, now that you have proposed to Gladys, Mr. Roulard is no longer dangerous."

"Oh, isn't he?" I muttered. "I'm not so sure of that!"

"And another thing," pursued Jane;

"if Mr. Roulard is allowed the entrée of the house half the glamor will be gone from him. Just as long as Gladys thinks she is forbidden to see him he will seem twice as attractive to her. Let him come to the house like anyone else and the romance will wear right off."

"Maybe," I acknowledged. "Well, it isn't my funeral, Jane. If you want to brave Mrs. Chayce's displeasure, go ahead. I know I wouldn't try it for a thousand dollars!"

"A whole thousand?" Jane's brows went up. "Careful, Jack; you're doing yourself an injustice." She smiled sweetly, too sweetly, and moved away. Chris joined her and they passed out of the door together in close conversation. After a while I wandered into the billiard-room and got into a game of golf-pool, but I was too irritated, for some reason, to play decently. About ten o'clock I pulled out and went for a stroll. It was a warm, starlit night and all the porches were occupied. As I passed along the road between the cottages I could catch snatches of low conversation and occasional bursts of merriment from the groups in the darkness, and now and then a glowing joss-stick fluttered like a firefly. The Milhams' cottage was brilliantly lighted and the windows and shades were up in the living room. I had a clear view of the interior. Neither Miss Gladys nor Chris was in the room, but as I came into view of the porch I could discern a blur of whiteness behind the vines.

"Jane," thought I, as I turned toward the beach, "may know what she's up to but I'm hanged if I do!"

I went back to the Inn feeling more irritated than when I left it, promising myself that in the morning I would tell Jane candidly what I thought of her management. But I am not what you would call an early riser, and by the time I reached the dining-room, getting in just after the doors had closed, at an expense of fifty cents slipped into the head waiter's palm, I found the table empty. Nor, although I searched the veranda and the beach, could I discover either Jane or Chris. They

turned up when luncheon was half through, and Jane informed me gaily that they had been driving. Chris looked apologetic.

"Yes," I growled, "and you've got your nose burned, and the skin will begin to peel off tomorrow."

Jane only laughed. I had finished my luncheon, but I kept my place for a few minutes, expecting Chris to say something about golf. When he did I meant to turn him down. But he didn't bring up the subject at all, and presently I left them, bought a New York paper and took myself to a corner of the veranda. After a while they appeared, but instead of coming my way they went around the corner to the side of the house. And although I sat there an hour longer they didn't come back. I puzzled a good deal over Jane's behavior, and in the end was forced to be satisfied with the dubious explanation that she was striving to wrest Chris's affections from Miss Gladys. I couldn't see the necessity for that, but I made allowance for a woman's natural love of intrigue. At four I went over to the links. As I rode away in the rickety carriage I could see Jane and Chris sitting side by side up there on the veranda.

You may be certain that I wasn't on my game that afternoon. I couldn't forget for a minute that in a few hours more I was to learn my fate—and the fate of Aunt Amanda's fortune. I was to dine at the Milhams', and after I was dressed I went down and knocked at Jane's door. But it was her maid that opened.

"Mrs. Dederick is dressing," she informed me.

"Then tell her—" but Jane's voice interrupted.

"Is that you, Jack?" she called.

"Yes," I replied gloomily.

"I'm so sorry, but I'm right in the midst of dressing. Mr. Roulard and I went for a walk along the beach and got back just a few minutes ago. I had no idea it was so late. Are you starting for the Milhams', Jack?"

"Yes."

"Well, good luck to you. But I'm

sure it will turn out all right, Jack. I shall wait up for you and you must tell me all about it when you get back."

"All right," I said; "but I guess there won't be much to tell."

"Nonsense!" said Jane. "Brace up; be a man. If you use that voice, Jack, it's all off before you start!" She laughed.

"I wish you were coming," I muttered.

"Why, you silly boy, I'd only be in the way. Run along now and do your best. I'm certain it will be all right."

"I'm not," I said dispiritedly as the door closed.

Dinner to me was a month long that evening. Mr. Milham was not at home; Daisy was unusually silent; Gladys scarcely opened her mouth and I was, I am sure, as dull as you find them. The task of making conversation fell to Mrs. Milham and Mrs. Chayce, and they each did their duty, Mrs. Chayce especially being in the best of spirits. I think now that she was striving to let me know that I had no reason for downheartedness, but at the time I failed to read any message in her smiling glances. I was determined to hear Miss Gladys's verdict as soon as possible; the suspense was making me as nervous as a hen in the rain. My opportunity occurred soon after dinner was over. We all went out on the porch together and had coffee, and then one by one the party disappeared indoors until only Miss Gladys and I remained. I can still remember vividly how cold and moist my hands were and how my heart was thumping as I put the question.

"Miss Gladys," I said, leaning across the wicker table and upsetting a half-empty cup of cold coffee down my sleeve, "you have not, I hope, forgotten our talk on Wednesday?"

She glanced around startledly, as though meditating flight, and then shook her head silently. The porch was quite dark now, but a ray of light from the living room fell on her bare head and made her hair gleam like gold. I warmed to my task.

"You mustn't think that because I have remained away from you since

then that I have been indifferent. On the contrary, I have been consumed with impatience; each day has seemed as long as twenty. If I have kept silence, it has been only because I feared to vex and harass you. But all the time I have been longing ardently for this moment to come. You can hardly know how much your answer will mean to me, what an influence it will have on my future happiness. And so"—my voice trembled in spite of me—"if you are ready to give your answer I beg of you to do so."

There was silence. She sat motionless across the little table. I waited until the suspense became intolerable.

"You have decided?" I asked hoarsely. Again she nodded.

"Then—then—Gladys, will you have me?" I blurted.

She nodded again.

I skirted the table and bent over her.

"My darling!" I cried rapturously, and sought to kiss her. My lips encountered the top of her bent head. "If you only knew how happy you've made me!" I whispered earnestly, and I'm sure my tone carried conviction, as it should, for she lifted her head and glanced at me for an instant out of troubled eyes.

"Oh, please!" she cried softly.

"What?" I asked gaily. "Are you sorry that you've made me happy?"

The golden head shook negatively. I drew a chair to her side and settled into it, taking her unresisting hand. My relief demanded expression, and for several minutes I talked on without pausing or knowing what I was really saying. But presently it dawned on me that my fiancée had spoken but two words since we had been left alone. Of course she was not a chatterer at any time, but her silence now seemed unnecessarily pronounced. My remarks lost their fervor, I stumbled and hesitated, my voice died away. For several minutes we sat there, hand in hand, gazing into the twilight gloom and listening to the patter of the waves on the beach. Anyone seeing us would have thought us as spongy as they make them. But although I strove to look and feel like a

lover in the seventh heaven of bliss, and called to mind a couplet,

. . . True gladness doth not always speak;
Joy bred and born but in the tongue is weak,

I was distinctly uncomfortable. I wondered if Miss Gladys would take it amiss were I to disengage my hand from hers long enough to light a cigar. I tried hard to think of something not absolutely idiotic to say. I realized that I ought to dwell on my happiness, but all I could think of was:

"Would you rather live in New York or outside, say on Long Island or up the Hudson?"

"I—I—just as you like," answered Miss Gladys so low I could scarcely hear her. That gave me an opportunity to discuss the relative merits of town and country life, which I did in detail for the next five minutes. Miss Gladys listened, and if silence gives assent she agreed with all I said. But even that subject couldn't last forever, and presently we were once more listening to the soft beat of the waves. The minutes passed. I clung desperately to her hand. I hummed a tune under my breath just to show how light-hearted I was, how perfectly at ease. She sat motionless with the light on her hair and her face toward the ocean. In my desperation I would have talked of the weather, but now every idea had flown and I couldn't trust myself to string a dozen words together. I was absolutely certain that if I opened my mouth I would say things to make her doubt my sanity. It was she who finally ended the suspense. She wrenched her hand from mine and sprang to her feet.

"Oh!" she exclaimed hysterically.

I was beside her instantly, anxious and sympathetic.

"You're cold!" I cried. "Come, we will go in."

We hurried to the door. I reached it first and held open the screen for her, gazing adoringly at the top of her head as she passed me without a glance. Three pairs of eyes fixed themselves questioningly, eagerly, on Miss Gladys and then on me. She walked to the table and began to turn over the leaves

of a magazine. I sank into a chair and fumbled for my cigar case.

"It was getting rather chilly out there," I announced to the company at large.

"Chilly?" asked Daisy cruelly. "The thermometer's at eighty-six!"

"Yes, but there's a certain dampness—"

Mrs. Chayce came to my relief.

"Gladys should have had her jacket on. Come over here by me, dear, and let me feel your hands."

Miss Gladys obediently took a seat on the couch at her mother's side and Mrs. Chayce beamed at her fondly. Mrs. Milham started a discussion as to the probable hour of arrival of her husband, who was coming from New York on a late train. As that subject showed signs of becoming threshed out, I arose and announced my departure. My hostess politely drew my attention to the earliness of the hour, but I pleaded weariness as the result of a hard afternoon on the links. Mrs. Chayce, drawing Miss Gladys with her, followed me out on the porch, and as I shook hands with her I said:

"I—we—I have something to tell you, Mrs. Chayce. May I call in the morning?"

She looked archly from me to Miss Gladys. "I think I can guess what it is," she said softly. She stooped and kissed her daughter and held out a hand to me. "I am very, very glad, my dear boy," she said sweetly. "You will find me at home all the morning. I shall look for you. Good night."

In some miraculous way she disappeared into the house, leaving Miss Gladys and me alone at the top of the steps. I took her hand and searched wildly for appropriate words.

"Er—good night—dear," I said.

"Good night," murmured Miss Gladys. I dropped her hand and plunged down the steps. At the gate I tilted my hat back, thrust my hands into my pockets and drew a deep breath of relief.

Jane was sitting with Chris on the front veranda when I reached the Inn. I joined them, sinking wearily into an

armchair. Jane flashed a question and I nodded. Chris said good night and went in.

"Well?" demanded Jane.

I sighed.

"It's all right," I answered. "She—er—she has made me happy."

Jane went off into a trill of laughter. I gazed at her moodily.

"Funny, is it?" I asked.

"Very, Jack! I—I'm so glad she hasn't made you miserable!" And she laughed again. "It must be fine to be as happy as you look! Now tell me all about it."

"There's nothing to tell. I asked her and she said yes."

"And then you took her in your eager arms and kissed her, I presume."

"Don't be silly," I said severely.

"You didn't kiss her, Jack?"

"Yes—no—I don't know what I did. I think I kissed her on the third puff from the front on the right-hand side."

"How romantic!" laughed Jane. "And does her mother know?"

"She guessed."

"Such acumen!" sighed Jane admiringly. "I suppose you will call tomorrow and ask her consent?"

I nodded. "I wish I was as sure of persuading her to marry me before the sixteenth as I am of getting the old lady's blessing," I said morosely.

"Don't trouble about that, Jack. You've won the principal battle. The rest is just a skirmish. May I suggest something?"

I nodded.

"Then make no announcement of the engagement. Don't let it get out."

"Why not?"

"Because I've been thinking it over and I've decided that the best thing to do under the circumstances is to elope."

"Elope!" I exclaimed. "What for?"

"What do folks usually elope for? To get married, of course."

"She'd never consent to that," I objected.

"I think she will. Don't you see that to announce your engagement tomorrow and get married a week later would cause all sorts of talk? You can't explain that it was necessary in

order to get your Aunt Amanda's estate. Why, folks might think you were marrying Gladys just to get the money!"

"Huh!" I muttered.

"Besides, a wedding like that would be almost worse than none. There'd be no time to prepare for anything; no trousseau, no invitations, no gifts, no nothing! Whereas, don't you see, if you just keep it all quiet and then go off together to—say to Providence—and get married, why, it all appears quite regular."

"Mrs. Chayce would be as mad as a hornet!"

"I don't think so. In fact, I think we can depend on her consent, Jack."

"The deuce we can!"

"Sh-sh! Don't let's tell everyone about it now, Jack. She'll think just the way I do; I'll see that she does. Tomorrow, you tell her frankly how it is and make her understand that you and Gladys must be married before your thirtieth birthday. You needn't say anything about an elopement, in fact, I'd rather you didn't. After you've gone I'll talk to her. Of course you have confided in me and I am all interest and sympathy. Then I spring the elopement scheme, point out its advantages and there you are!"

"Sounds all right," I owned, "but supposing she doesn't see it?"

"She will see it," answered Jane positively. "Oh, it's all quite simple. You leave it to me, Jack. Go to bed and don't bother your head about it."

"All right," I said gratefully after a moment. "It's mighty good of you, Jane, to take so much trouble. Anybody would think it was your marriage instead of mine!"

"We'll talk about that later," said Jane, with a smile. "There'll be time enough for me when Gladys Chayce is safely married."

"What do you mean?" I asked suspiciously.

Jane only laughed provokingly.

"Look here," I demanded, "I'll bet there's something up between you and Chris Roulard!"

"The ideal!" she murmured.

"I'll bet there is! But let me tell

you right now, Jane, that I won't—won't permit anything of the sort. Why, he—he's just a kid!"

"I don't think it's especially nice of you to taunt me with my age," said Jane, with dignity.

"I didn't! But—but, why, the idea's preposterous!" I got up and walked to the rail and back. "You're only fooling, aren't you?" I begged.

"I wasn't aware that I had admitted anything," responded Jane loftily. "I think it is you who have—have drawn conclusions."

"What else can I do," I demanded hotly, "when you spend almost every hour of the day with him? Why, hang it, I haven't seen you for five minutes at a time since you came!"

"That's very silly. And, anyway, please don't shout; there are folks in the office. I've said nothing about Mr. Roulard, although if—if I did—decide to marry him—"

"Then he has proposed!"

"I don't quite see where your authority comes in," she ended.

"You don't? Well, I do! I—I'm your friend and I don't propose to stand by and see you make a fool of yourself. Why, he hasn't a cent to his name! He—he—he can't even play a decent game of golf!"

"Don't let us talk about making fools of ourselves, Jack," she answered sweetly. "I'm sure I didn't set the fashion. And I don't see that the ability to play golf is any criterion when it comes to a question of marriage."

"Oh, you can beat me at talking," I said angrily, "but I'm right, and you know it. Why, I'd almost rather see you marry that fellow Berkenside, and the Lord knows he's bad enough!"

"I'm sorry my suitors don't please you, Jack," said Jane, with deep concern. "Perhaps you'd like to suggest somebody yourself?"

"I don't see why you have to marry again at all," I answered. "Once ought to be enough. You'll never find another chap like Elliot, I can tell you that!"

"I don't expect to," answered Jane quietly, as she arose. "We won't dis-

cuss this any more at present, Jack. Good night."

"Good night," I answered shortly.

Jane went upstairs and I made my way to the billiard-room.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Mrs. Chayce Approves

THEY say it takes two to make a quarrel, and I guess it does. The next morning at the breakfast table, although I was ready to go on where we'd left off the night before, Jane flatly refused.

"This is my last day here, Jack, and I'm not going to have you spoil it."

"Your last day!" I ejaculated with a sinking heart. "What do you mean?"

"That I'm going back to Shelter Island tomorrow. You didn't suppose that I'd come to spend the whole summer with you, Jack?"

"I thought you'd stay until I was out of the woods." (Chris had breakfasted early and gone his way, and we could speak out.)

"You'll be out of the woods by this evening," answered Jane. "You surely don't expect me to marry her for you?"

I shook my head doubtfully.

"Lots of things might happen before the sixteenth," I said, "and if you were here—"

"It's your place to see that things don't happen, except as you want them to. No, Jack, I must go back in the morning. It's nice of you to want me to stay, even if your motive is wholly selfish."

I was silent a while, eating my chop glumly.

"I suppose that ass Waldo Berken-side is there," I growled.

"If you mean at Shelter Island," returned Jane placidly, "he is not, to the best of my belief; but he is expected there the middle of the month."

"Which, I take it, is why you're hurrying back," I suggested.

Jane paused in her mortal combat

with a steak and looked across at me for a moment with a puzzled frown.

"Jack," she asked, "will you tell me something?"

"I suppose so," I answered uneasily. You never can tell what Jane will ask.

"Are you jealous of Mr. Berkenside and Mr. Roulard?"

It was my turn to stare.

"Jealous!" I exclaimed. "Of course I'm not! Why should I be jealous?"

Jane flushed slightly.

"I've wondered myself," she replied. "But your remarks have certainly suggested it. Your attitude with regard to Mr. Berkenside in particular seems like that of the dog in the manger. I'm glad to hear that I'm mistaken."

"Jealousy hasn't anything to do with it," I said uncomfortably. "As a friend of yours—and of Elliot's—"

"We will leave Elliot out of it, please," said Jane with dignity. "If you are through your breakfast, don't you think you'd better go over and have your talk with mamma? It's almost eleven."

I amused myself for a moment dropping breadcrumbs into my finger bowl.

"I wish you'd stay the week out," I muttered.

"It would never do," said Jane, with a shake of her head. "I'm sure we'd quarrel every day."

"I won't say another word if you'll stay," I pleaded. "I suppose I have been nasty, Jane. I don't know what's the matter with me just now. I suppose it's the—the worry—the anxiety. We never used to quarrel, Jane."

"Oh, yes, Jack, we've quarreled lots of times; you've forgotten, I guess. But we always make up, don't we?"

"You bet," I replied heartily. "You are a regular brick, you know."

"I hope you'll always think that, Jack," she said soberly. "But run along now and get it over with. I'll give you an hour and then I'll follow."

It was a fine day, the heat tempered by a little breeze from the ocean, and already the beach was thronged with Sunday bathers. When I reached the Milhams' I found Mr. Milham and

Daisy on the porch, surrounded by rustling barriers of newspapers. I gathered from Mr. Milham's manner as he greeted me that he had been made acquainted with the state of affairs; his features wore that half sarcastic grin with which a married man receives the converts to his Order. I took a chair and inquired after the absent members of the family.

"Mamma and Mrs. Chayce are in the house," said Daisy, "and Gladys and Mr. Roulard have just gone down to the beach—to look for you, they said." Daisy smiled wickedly. She looked mighty attractive this morning, in a dress of cool green linen, and the sunlight, filtering through the screen, threw a charming light on her soft cheeks. I found myself wishing that I might stay there and look at her.

"Daisy," said I, "we haven't had any golf for a long time."

"You've been so busy," she answered regretfully.

"How about tomorrow afternoon?"

She hesitated a moment.

"Very well," she agreed, "if you're sure you can spare the time."

"I can spare anything except the pleasure of your company," I answered. Daisy hid her face behind her paper. I tried to pull it aside and in the struggle our hands met and—I'm sure neither she nor I intended it—clasped together. It was for an instant only, for hers struggled free and the laugh died out of her face. I retreated silently, leaning back in my chair and regarding my shoes thoughtfully. I wondered—I wondered if I had made a mistake. Gladys was certainly a beauty, but Daisy . . . there was something fine about Daisy . . .

I stole a look toward her, but found her hidden behind the *Herald*. Mr. Milham, however, was peering across the top of the *Sun*, and I knew what was passing in his mind; he was wondering why I didn't ask him to play this afternoon. I addressed Daisy.

"I'd have said today instead of tomorrow, but Mrs. Dederick leaves in the morning, and I'm afraid she's had rather a dull time of it so far. I

thought I'd take her to drive this afternoon over toward Watch Hill."

Mr. Milham disappeared from sight with a slight rustle of his paper.

"Tomorrow will suit me much better," said Daisy coldly.

I arose.

"I'll just step in and speak to Mrs. Chayce a moment," I announced. There was no reply from Daisy, but Mr. Milham came into sight again.

"Er—you'll stay to dinner, Manton?"

"Thanks, but I think not today."

"Mr. Roulard is going to," observed Daisy. "Mamma asked him and he said he would."

"Then you won't want another starving man to feed," I answered lightly. "Two guests of Quinepog Inn would bankrupt you."

I entered the house. Mrs. Chayce arose from a dim corner of the living room and came forward with a pleasant rustling of silken skirts and a murmured greeting. I confess to having felt a bit frightened when I entered, but she soon put me at ease. For a minute she talked of the weather and the bathing, and when she paused I had found my courage.

"I think you know pretty well what I want to say, Mrs. Chayce," I began. "I—I've never done this before and it seems a bit difficult." She smiled kindly and encouragingly. "But—well, I asked your daughter to marry me and last evening she gave me her answer."

"Gladys told me," said Mrs. Chayce softly.

"She's accepted me, but of course I realize that without your approval—er—" I hesitated.

"I would find it hard to disapprove of any man my daughter set her affections on," said Mrs. Chayce, "although, of course, there might be circumstances which would demand the—ah—the exercise of my authority. A mother's duty, Mr. Manton, is sacred."

I bowed.

"But in the present case," continued Mrs. Chayce with a smile, "I find my sympathies already engaged. Of course Gladys consulted me as soon as you did her the honor of proposing

marriage, Mr. Manton, and we talked it over, more, I think, like chums than like daughter and parent, although that sounds—does it not?—like a reflection on the relations between the latter. Gladys and I have been so—so chummy—I can think of no better word, Mr. Manton—that I have grown to look on her more in the light of a younger sister than a daughter."

"I can quite understand that," I murmured with conviction. "It is very difficult to me to realize that you can have a daughter of her age."

Mrs. Chayce and I beamed at each other.

"I actually believe you are making love to me, Mr. Manton!" she exclaimed archly.

"I beg your pardon, I'm sure," I responded. "But you must grant that the temptation is extreme, Mrs. Chayce."

She laughed gaily, shook her fan at me and returned to seriousness.

"Of course Gladys is a very attractive girl, Mr. Manton, if I do say it."

"She is, indeed," I replied.

"And I won't deny that I've been ambitious for her. But her happiness is the first consideration, isn't it? And as she cares for you and you are in position to make her happy, as I believe you are, Mr. Manton, I can only say to you, take her, be good to her, cherish her as I have cherished her." Mrs. Chayce touched her eyes with a tiny handkerchief and smiled tremulously.

"I think you will have no cause to regret entrusting her to me, my dear Mrs. Chayce," I responded. "I shall always do my best to make her happy. Of course I realize that at present her love for me is—is more—more embryonic than actual but—"

"There you are wrong, I am sure, Mr. Manton! I am sure that her affection for you is already very sincere. You must remember that Gladys is not one of the demonstrative kind; it's not in her nature. Still waters, Mr. Manton, run deep."

"I should like to believe it," I said eagerly.

"You may, you may indeed," Mrs. Chayce assured me.

"You make me very happy," I returned ardently. There was a pause. Mrs. Chayce observed me expectantly. "Now in regard to my pecuniary circumstances—"

She made a polite disclaimer of interest.

"As you have heard, I think, by the recent death of an aunt, I come into about seven hundred thousand."

"I have not heard the exact figures," said Mrs. Chayce.

"The will, however, was a—peculiar one."

"Really?" Mrs. Chayce's forehead showed two little wrinkles above her nose.

I hastened on.

"The money comes to me only on the condition that I am married prior to my thirtieth birthday."

"Ah! But—but you are not thirty yet, Mr. Manton?"

"No, Mrs. Chayce, but I shall be thirty one week from today."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Chayce.

"One week from today," I reiterated firmly. "If I am not married before midnight on the fifteenth I lose the estate."

I was prepared for most anything from Mrs. Chayce—incredulity, dismay, resentment, disappointment, anger, anything save what I found. For a brief moment she looked through me rather than at me, her hands clasped tightly in her lap and two little vertical creases above her well-shaped nose. Then the frown vanished and she arose with an air of determination.

"In that case," she said, "there is no time to be lost."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

I Hire an Auto

JANE left Monday morning, and in spite of the fact that I was quite unused to such early rising, I breakfasted with her after a fashion and saw her off.

"Let me hear how things are going,

Jack," she said. "A note every day or two will answer. Don't forget, for I shall be anxious."

"I won't. And don't you think it would be a good idea, then, for us to come to Shelter Island on the—er—honeymoon?"

"I do not," said Jane positively.

"Then where—"

"My dear boy," she interrupted impatiently, "don't ask me to conduct your wedding tour for you! Good-bye."

"Good-bye," I replied mournfully, clinging to her hand. "You'll write?"

"Whenever you do. And now, if you don't want to break your neck, I'd advise you to get off."

I missed Jane a good deal the next few days, but I had the comfort of knowing that she had arranged everything satisfactorily before leaving. Mrs. Chayce had hailed the elopement plan with positive delight. Gladys had agreed without demur, if, also, without enthusiasm. It was to be all very secret. On Friday after luncheon I was to await Gladys at the end of the village in an automobile. She was to steal out of the house by the back way, with a handbag, and we were to get to Providence at four and be married, leaving there for Boston after dinner. My trunk and Gladys's were to be sent to the hotel at Providence by express on Thursday. The arrangements were complete.

On Tuesday Mrs. Chayce and Gladys went to New York on an early train and I followed two hours later. They were to do some shopping, for I was given to understand that even when a young lady elopes it is necessary to shop beforehand. Then Mrs. Chayce was to meet Mr. Woodridge and me at luncheon. She would, she said, understand the conditions of Aunt Amanda's will so much better if she could have the lawyer explain it to her. Woodridge was prompt and Mrs. Chayce only twenty minutes late, and we sat down to an enjoyable luncheon in the cool and well-nigh deserted dining-room of an uptown hotel. Mr. Woodridge explained the will to Mrs. Chayce's satis-

faction, congratulated me on having (as he put it) dealt successfully with a difficult situation, and undertook to draw up an agreement whereby I was to pledge myself to settle the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars on Gladys. Mr. Woodridge, who was a widower, was, I could see, vastly taken with Mrs. Chayce, and after we had placed her in a hansom and shaken hands, he beguiled me back into the café.

"A mighty handsome woman that, Manton," he sighed. "And a woman with a lot of business ability, sir. You are to be congratulated on marrying into such a family, my boy." He asked a good many questions, both in regard to Mrs. Chayce and Quinepog Beach. "I don't see why I shouldn't run down there the last of the week," he said, "and try the bathing. I think I will—I think I will."

He dropped me at the station and held the cabby long enough to say, "By the way, you'll want some money, Manton. Honeymoons are expensive things. I guess there'll be no harm in my advancing you two or three thousand. I'll mail you a check this evening. Good-bye and good luck, my boy. The Quinepog Inn, you said? Yes, yes. Go ahead, cabby!"

On the way back to Quinepog I wondered whether Mrs. Chayce was destined to find a husband as well as a son-in-law by reason of Aunt Amanda's will.

I didn't see very much of Gladys during the rest of the week. Her mother took her to New York again on Thursday, and even when she was at home she was so busy preparing for the elopement that we had very little time together. I won't deny that this was rather a relief to me, for I had never been engaged before and was at something of a loss to know how to carry the situation. I played billiards with Chris, went in bathing with Daisy, and played golf with both of them. How much they knew of what was going on under their noses I couldn't guess. I think there was a well defined impression extant in Quinepog that Gladys

and I were either engaged or soon to become so, and it seemed to me that Chris must realize the fact. But he was in very good spirits those days, and spent much of his spare time at the Milhams'. I wondered whether he was preparing to console himself with Daisy. We were both there together Thursday evening. I got roped in for cards, while Daisy, Gladys and Chris sat on the porch. In the middle of the evening Daisy came in, leaving the others out there together. This, I thought, was all against the conventions. It was plainly my duty to spend this last evening with Gladys, but we had each had a rubber, and I didn't quite see how I was to break away from the card table. Finally Mr. Milham and Mrs. Chayce won, as usual, and when I stepped outside I found that Daisy had slipped out ahead of me, and that the three of them were talking and laughing gaily at the end of the porch. I managed to find a moment alone with Gladys on leaving.

"Good night," I whispered, tenderly taking her hand. "Until tomorrow!"

To my surprise her hand clung to mine.

"Mr. Manton—Jack," she said in low tones. "If—if anything should happen, please, *please* try not to be angry with me!"

"Angry with you?" I laughed. "My dear, lots of things will happen to you and me, but I'm sure I shall never be angry with you. You're tired, and no wonder. Go to bed and have a good night's rest." I raised her hand and pressed a kiss on the cool, slender fingers. "Good night, dear."

"Good night," she whispered wearily.

Chris and I walked home together. We were both rather silent. It was only as we neared the Inn that he spoke.

"I'm thinking of leaving tomorrow or next day," he said. "And I want to thank you, Manton, for—for being so decent to me down here."

"Piffle!" I said

"No, I mean it," he went on earnestly. "It was good of you. You've been mighty decent; and I don't want

—don't want you to think me ungrateful. If—if you ever find cause to, I wish you'd try to remember that a fellow can't always control his acts and—and—"

"My dear chap," I exclaimed, "I don't know what under the sun you're talking about! But whatever it is, it's all right." I slapped him on the shoulder to brighten him up. "For that matter, Chris, I don't know what I'd have done without you. I'd have been bored to death. Come in and have a drink before you go up."

"No, thanks," he said soberly. "Not tonight."

I went on to the billiard-room alone, wondering what had got into everyone tonight to give them remorse. As for me, I never felt more contented with life!

But I was inclined to be a bit grouchy in the morning when I awoke to find it raining. It seemed to me that as the average fellow isn't likely to elope more than once in a lifetime it was as little as the weather could do to provide him with blue sky and sunlight. I don't suppose that there's really any difference between the rain that you find at the seashore and the rain you get in town, but to me it has always seemed that a rainy day at the beach has all other varieties of rainy days simply tied to the dock. It has a depressing quality all its own. If I were one of the superstitious sort, one of the kind who believes in omens and portents and "feelings," I'd have been certain that there was trouble in store for me. Even as it was, I confess that my nerves were rather ragged.

After breakfast—for it was best, I thought, to act as though nothing especial was on the program—I found Chris and we played billiards. Just whether he or I played the worst game I can't say. But I'm certain the longest run was four, and after one game was over we were both glad to quit. Chris said something about writing a letter, and I volunteered the information that I was going over to the Milhams' for a while. That was the last I saw of Chris that day. At the Milhams' only

Daisy was visible. Everyone else, she informed me, was out of sorts and was staying upstairs. Gladys was lying down with a headache. I expressed my regrets.

"And you?" I asked. "What is your complaint?"

"Nothing but boredom," she answered.

"I can remedy that by leaving."

"It's not you, it's the weather. I—I feel like doing something desperate."

"So do I," I said. "Can you suggest anything?"

"A long walk?"

"Too tame."

"A ride?"

"Ugh!"

"Then let's go in bathing! I dare you to!"

"I never take a dare when I can help it," I answered. "I'll meet you in ten minutes."

It was rather fun. We had the ocean and the beach to ourselves. The weather was fairly warm, and the rain was just cold enough to make the water seem warm by comparison. We stayed in a good while, and when we finally came out it was close on luncheon time. I declined an invitation to partake of the Milham hospitality and hurried back to the Inn to pack my things. My trunk had gone off the day before, and there was only my bag to attend to. My golf clubs I had purposely left at the club house; it would be quite as easy to get them from there as from the hotel. At half-past one I went down to the dining-room, and had just started my luncheon when a page brought me a telegram. As I opened it I had no premonitions. The first thing I saw was that it was signed "C. H. Roulard"; the next that it was dated from New London. It was only when I had read the message three times that its meaning dawned on me.

We will be married soon after this reaches you. Gladys asks your forgiveness.

"He might have put it in ten words," I thought stupidly. For a moment I stared dully at the message. Then a full realization of what it meant to me struck me like a blow in the face. I

topped over my chair, upset the bottle of catsup, rushed from the hall, seized the first cap that met my eye and hurried through the rain to the Milhams'. It couldn't be true! I should find Gladys at home! In another moment I should be laughing at Chris's hoax. I laughed a little in anticipation, but it didn't sound quite right. When I broke into the living room at the Milhams' Mrs. Chayce was on the couch and Mrs. Milham was regaling her with smelling salts. A sheet of yellow paper lay on the floor. Daisy turned an excited face to me as I paused breathless at the doorway. I brandished the telegram in my hand.

"Is it true?" I cried.

"Yes," answered Daisy with a ring of defiance in her voice.

I sank into a chair and dropped my head into my hands with a groan. Presently Mrs. Chayce's voice aroused me from my stupor.

"The wicked, unnatural child!" she moaned. "I'll never forgive her, never as long as I live! I'll never set eyes on her again! I'll—"

"Hush, dear; hush," soothed Mrs. Milham. "Try to be calm. Let me take you to your room. Have a drop more of the brandy, do."

"To think of her treating me like this!" wailed Mrs. Chayce. "After all I've done for her, after all the plans I'd made! To run away with a beggar! Well, she's chosen! She'll starve, and she needn't come to me for help! Never a crust will I give her, not a crumb!" She allowed Mrs. Milham to half lift her from the couch and lead her toward the stairway. It was then that she caught sight of me. She paused at the bottom of the stairway, clutching the rail, her face red and swollen and her hair disheveled. "You—poor fool!" she cried. "If you'd had the sense of a goose you'd have looked after her!"

I made no answer, and sobbing and reviling she went up the stairs.

I sat on in silence, motionless, trying to think. But my thoughts danced and sizzled like bubbles on a hot stove. I had left the door ajar, and it opened slowly with a low whine of its damp

hinges and the cool, salty air blew in. A sudden gust drove the rain in on the porch with a brisk patter. I felt a soft hand on my arm and glanced up to find Daisy looking down upon me, kindly and sweetly sympathetic.

"I'm so sorry," she said softly.

I reached up and pressed her hand gratefully.

"I didn't think you really cared so much," she added.

"Care!" I groaned. "Wouldn't you care if you were losing all that?"

"All—that?" faltered Daisy.

I recollected that she didn't know all the circumstances. She pulled her hand gently away.

"I'm sorry for her," she murmured, "sorry for her, too."

"Oh, she'll get on all right," I answered. "Chris isn't a fool."

"I didn't mean Gladys; I meant her mother. I'm not sorry for Gladys. I—I'm glad."

"Glad!" I exclaimed.

"Glad, for she's married the man she loves. Shouldn't I be glad?"

"Don't ask me," I replied bitterly. "I'm afraid I can't judge the question calmly yet. I remember that you warned me, though, that day on the links."

"Because I knew," said Daisy simply. "I knew and I helped them."

"What?"

"I did," she answered steadily. "You may be angry with me if you like, but I helped them all I could. This morning I plotted to get you out of the way so Gladys could leave the house without being seen. I'm sorry that you're—you're disappointed, but it was Mr. Roulard she loved, don't you see? It—it never was you and never would have been."

"Oh, you're right, I dare say; I knew she didn't love me. I don't suppose a girl could love me."

"Oh, yes, the right girl could," said Daisy.

The right girl! Did she mean—? Did she mean anything? I thought hard for several moments. Daisy left my side and walked across to the window, standing with her back to me,

her slender form silhouetted against the gray light. I stole a glance—another—my heart warmed and hope came back at a bound. It was not too late! There was yet time if—! I leaped to my feet, reached her side in two strides and seized her hands.

"Daisy!" I cried, my words tripping over each other and my voice trembling, "Daisy! It isn't too late! It was all a mistake about Gladys Chayce; she wasn't the right one, dear; I never cared for her as—as I care now! Listen. There's a whole day yet; the car is waiting at the end of the street; we have only to get into it and everything's all right, Daisy! We can be in Providence in two hours! Think what it means to me! You'll come? Oh, I know it sounds strange to you, and sudden, and reckless, but I can't explain now; there isn't time. Only trust me, Daisy! Come with me! Be mine!"

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

I Go to Jane

DAISY wrenched her hands away, drawing back and staring at me wide-eyed.

"Are you—are you asking me to marry you?" she asked incredulously.

"Yes, yes," I answered impatiently. "Of course it sounds idiotic, but the time is so short and—"

Daisy smiled disdainfully.

"Do you think I will marry you merely to satisfy your—your pique, to—to—"

"Pique!" I repeated, wildly striving to seize her hand again. "*Pique!* Is that what you call seven hundred thousand dollars? You don't understand! It's a long story, but I can explain if you'll only—"

"Mr. Manton, don't spoil our friendship, please. Let me at least respect you!"

"But think; think!"

"I have thought," she answered coldly, retreating around the center table, "and if you really want to know

what I think, Mr. Manton, I think you must be crazy!"

It was all up. Her tone convinced me. I let my arms fall hopelessly.

"This is your—your final answer?" I asked quietly.

"It is."

"You have broken my heart!" I muttered. "Good-bye."

I seized my cap—somebody's cap—from the floor and strode toward the door. I think Daisy said something, but I didn't hear. Outside, at the edge of the porch, she seized my arm.

"Please!" she cried in alarm. "Don't do anything reckless, Mr. Manton!"

I made no answer, only strove to put that cap on with my free hand. It was many sizes too small and I had to give it up.

"What are you going to do?" she continued anxiously. "Where are you going?"

"Going? I don't know," I muttered, gazing wearily over the rain-soaked prospect. And I didn't then. But the next moment I did. I turned to face her with a great light of determination in my face. I waved that cap toward the leaden sky. "Going?" I cried, "*I'm going to Jane!*"

It seemed that even the time-table had joined in the vast conspiracy to defeat me. I reached New York just too late for the express on the Long Island road, too late for the steamer. Afterward I learned that I could have left the train at New London and reached Shelter Island from there by boat in a short time. But I knew nothing, then, of that fact. I had dinner in New York, but I ate little. What, I asked myself miserably, was the use of eating when in another thirty hours all my hopes and plans would come crumbling down about my ears? And, too, the recollection, which came to me between salad and coffee, that back at the end of the road in Quinepog an automobile was running up a bill against me at the rate of seven dollars an hour, sadly mitigated against my peace of mind. I had instructed that

liveryman to hold that car for me until I came, if it was all night, and I knew he would be just fool enough to do it!

I gulped down my coffee and raced to the telegraph booth and scribbled this message:

Dismiss car awaiting me under willows back of golf grounds. Detained in New York. Forward mail and telegrams to Farview House, Shelter Island.

"Please get that off at once," I begged the operator. "Every minute of delay is costing me twelve cents. And I'm a poor man!"

I rushed off to a cab and so to the ferry. We pulled out of Long Island City in a wild storm of wind and rain. The car windows rattled beneath the assault of the elements and the drops played a devil's tattoo on the panes. I settled down for a long and wearisome ride. And, after all, what was I to gain by the journey? What, in heaven's name, could Jane do for me? I had merely acted on a wild impulse to fly to her and tell her my troubles. All the advice in the world couldn't help me now. In twenty-nine hours it would be midnight of July fifteenth, and after that Aunt Amanda's money would mean no more to me than to that bearded and booted farmer half asleep in the opposite seat. Still, it was a relief to be doing something, even if that something was quite impracticable. I'd have become a gibbering maniac if I had had to stay in Quinepog and watch the rain.

What seemed strange to me then, and seems so still, is the fact that I couldn't seem to summon any bitterness against either Chris Roulard or Gladys. I knew that I ought to be frightfully incensed with Chris. I wasn't certain that it wasn't my duty to challenge him to a duel, or shoot him on sight; but for the life of me I couldn't seem to cultivate animosity against either of them. To my mind the one person most to blame was Mrs. Chayce. She, I thought, might have managed things better.

Of course the train was late, and when I finally reached the end of the

route I found that there was no way to get over to the island before morning. Not that that made much difference, however; for the first time in a month, days, hours and minutes had no interest for me. I found a hotel and went to bed. Strange to say, I fell asleep the moment my head reached the pillow, and I slept until well into the middle of the morning. I awoke calmer in mind. If I was not already reconciled to the loss of my fortune, I was at least becoming philosophical. After a leisurely breakfast, which tasted extremely good, I went across to the island. When we reached the dock a group of people were waiting to board the boat, and as I walked ashore my eyes fell on a man and a girl in the group. I started and stared in bewilderment—at Chris and Gladys!

They didn't see me and I made no move to intercept them. After all, what did it matter? Why shouldn't they be at Shelter Island? I went on. Ahead of me, strolling in the same direction, was a figure that looked familiar. Despite the fact that a parasol hid head and shoulders I couldn't mistake it.

"Jane!" I called.

She turned, saw me apparently without surprise, and waited me smilingly.

"I'd given you up," she said as I took her hand. "I thought you'd come last night."

"You expected me?" I gasped.

"Certainly. Chris and Gladys came yesterday afternoon and I expected you last evening. You missed connections?"

"Yes," I sighed. "I missed connections—all around."

We walked on for a moment in silence.

"Does it still hurt?" asked Jane presently.

"Oh, I suppose I'll get used to it in time. But it's a little bit of a jolt to get so near to a bunch of money and then see it fade away."

"You're only thinking of the money," mused Jane.

"Oh, well—of course Gladys Chayce is charming, but—you knew all the time that—er—"

"Yes, I knew," answered Jane. "That's why I did it."

"Did it? Did what?"

She waved her hand toward where the boat was steaming away toward Greenport.

"Did that," she said simply.

I stopped and stared at her.

"Jane!" I cried. "Do you mean that you—you—"

"Yes, I arranged it all, Jack. It wasn't quite fair, perhaps, but I had to do it to save you from a lot of unhappiness. I'm sorry if I've hurt you, but—"

"Good Lord!" I gasped. "And I thought you were helping me! You promised to help me!"

"I promised to help you get your money, Jack, not to marry Gladys."

"And this is your idea of helping!" I laughed mirthlessly. "It seems to me, Jane, you've made a good deal of a botch of things. But I suppose it's easy enough to see somebody else lose a fortune."

"Have you decided, then, to let it go without another effort?" she asked.

"Let it go! What else can I do, for heaven's sake? There's only today left!"

Jane turned from the sidewalk and led the way through the open gate of an estate. Nearby was a wooden seat under a big maple. I don't know whose grounds they were and I don't believe Jane did. She was never one to be bothered by a little thing like that. She sank into the seat.

"Sit down, Jack," she said, "and let's talk."

"You talk," I sighed. "I'm too—too up in the air."

"Yes, I'll talk," she answered. "And you listen. What's done is done, whether for good or bad. Gladys and Chris are happy. If she had married you she would have been miserable, Chris would have been broken-hearted, and you would have been bored and unhappy after the first month or two, and I—but never mind that. Can you

think of anything, any way to satisfy the demands of that will?"

"No," I said. "If you'd let me do what I wanted to do, have a second choice to fall back on—"

"Don't be absurd," said Jane sharply.

"Absurd or not, I wouldn't have been dished like this! I can't find a girl to marry me now, you know."

"Are you certain of that?" asked Jane in a queer voice.

"What do you mean?" I puzzled.

"I mean that if you weren't too particular who the girl was—"

"Particular! Great Scott! This is no time to be particular! If you have any scheme, Jane, for heaven's sake out with it!"

"Then listen. There's only one way to get your aunt's money, Jack, and that's to marry before twelve o'clock tonight. And as far as I know there's only one woman who is willing to— to come to your assistance."

"It's no good," I said; "I've asked her."

"Asked whom?"

"Daisy Milham. I don't mind acknowledging that I *had* thought just as you do, but—"

"Jack Manton!" gasped Jane. "Do you mean to tell me that you proposed to Daisy Milham?"

"Why not?"

"Well, of all—! What did she say?"

"She said no."

"Anything else, Jack?"

"I don't just recall the entire conversation. I believe, however, that she threw doubts on my sanity."

"It's a wonder she didn't throw something else!" said Jane.

"I don't see that," I objected. "It was a perfectly good proposal of marriage, quite respectful if"—I smiled ruefully—"a trifle hurried. But, look here, if you don't mean Daisy, whom did you mean? Is there anyone else? Oh, don't hesitate," I begged. "Let me know the worst; I can stand most anything; beggars can't be choosers, you know."

But Jane still hesitated, frowning and poking the toe of one slender slipper

with the end of her parasol. My heart sank again.

"Come on," I sighed. "Let's get to the hotel. I need—refreshment."

"Wait," said Jane. "I said there was one woman willing to—help you, Jack. I meant it."

"You know of one? Who is she? Where is she?"

"Here," answered Jane quietly.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

I Make a Confession

"HERE?" I looked around. "Where?"

"Beside you," said Jane.

I stared incredulously.

"You? Jane, you don't mean it! You don't mean it! You're—you're only plaguing me!"

"No, I'm quite in earnest, Jack. I've spoiled your plans and now I'll do what I can to help you." Her eyes met mine fairly. Her face was pale, but she was quite composed. My heart was hammering like a sledge. For a moment I couldn't say anything. Finally though:

"You really mean, Jane, that you'll marry me today—in time—"

"At once, if you like, Jack. It's better not to put it off too late. Something might happen."

I seized her hands and wrung them frantically until she winced.

"By Jove, Lady!" I cried. "You're the best ever! You're the best chum a fellow ever had! You're—you're—" Then I dropped her hands and shook my head soberly. "It's fine of you, Jane," I said, "but it's no use, you know."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm not—not the biggest cad in the world, after all. I suppose I've done some pretty queer things to get that money, old girl, but—here's where I quit."

"And why?"

"Because I won't have you sacrificing yourself for me like that, Jane. It wouldn't do. You'd hate me like sin—afterward."

"No, there's where you're wrong, Jack," responded Jane calmly. "We know each other pretty well, Jack. We know each other's faults. I think—I think we'd get on rather well together. I think—I think we're fond of each other—in a way."

"I'm fond of you, all right, Lady," I said. "And if the thing *could* be, I'd be so darn glad that I'd yell! But—" I shook my head.

"Not even if I ask it as a favor, Jack? Not even if I beg it? Not even if I promise to be—be happy with you—always?"

"You wouldn't be."

"I would," Jane laughed softly. "Stupid boy, don't you suppose I know what I'm doing? Don't you suppose I know you?"

"Not if you think I'm mean enough to do this thing."

"It isn't meanness, Jack! It—it's—Oh, don't spoil it all now! Every hour counts, Jack! Soon it will be too late, and then—then—"

"It's too late now," I said stubbornly.

"It isn't! Think of the money, Jack! Think—think of me!"

"It's you I am thinking of, Jane."

"You're not; you're just thinking of your pride or your—your something else nasty!" exclaimed Jane impatiently. "This isn't a time to be squirmish; be a man; do something—do it, whether it's right or wrong!"

"You didn't talk that way a month ago," I said grimly.

"Because things were different then. Now we are the only ones that can suffer if—if it shouldn't turn out just right. Are you afraid you'll meet someone afterward you'll like better, Jack? If you are, don't let that worry you. I'll see that she doesn't come between us, Jack; trust me!"

"I think I'm worrying lest you might find someone like that, Jane."

"Am I, then, so—so impressionable, Jack?"

"I don't know," I answered doubtfully. "I suppose not. But there is Chris and Berkenside."

"Chris is married and Mr. Berken-

side doesn't come until tomorrow, and by that time we'll be away."

I was silent a moment. Then, "By thunder," I cried, "I'll do it, if only to see that he doesn't get you!"

"Is that your only reason?" asked Jane a trifle wistfully.

"No, it isn't. If I thought you really cared a lot for him—I'd—I wouldn't do it. Do you, Jane?"

"Is it likely?" she asked.

"I don't know. You're so darned good to me, Lady," I said huskily; "there's no knowing what you might do."

Jane laughed softly.

"You *are* stupid, Jack," she murmured.

"Maybe," I answered gaily, jumping up. "But I know I'm mighty happy. This is your last chance to change your mind, Jane. Do you—want to?" I awaited anxiously. Jane raised her eyes to mine and there was something in them that set my heart a-pounding.

"No," she said softly.

We walked back to the road in silence. Something strange and wonderful had happened to me, I didn't know what. I only knew that I seemed to be walking on air, that the sunlight had never before looked so bright, the sky so blue. And all the time I was troubled by a quite new timidity, a strange shyness that kept me a good pace from Jane's side. Had I touched her hand at that moment I don't know what foolishness I might not have committed. We went on together along the road with never a word until the Farview House was reached.

"Auntie will be so glad to see you," said Jane then, conversationally.

"No gladder than I shall be to see her again," I answered. We paused by mutual consent at the foot of the steps, out of hearing of the people on the piazza, and I looked at my watch.

"When do we have luncheon?" I asked.

"At one," answered Jane.

"Then I have the better part of an hour to arrange things. Is there a minister around here, do you suppose?"

"Yes, and a dear little church with

ivy on it," she replied. "Chris and Gladys were married there yesterday afternoon. She told me how to find it. The minister lives in the little white house on this side of it."

I consulted the time-table in my pocket.

"There's a train at seven-thirty," I said. "If we are married at five, Jane, we can have dinner here and get over to Greenport in time for it. What do you say?"

"Very well, Jack. I can be ready at five." There was a deeper flush than usual on Jane's cheeks, I thought, and she looked lovelier than ever.

"Well—good-bye, then," I said awkwardly, disconcerted at feeling the blood creeping up into my face.

"Good-bye," said Jane. Our eyes seemed as though they didn't want to part, and I looked so long as I turned away that I walked into someone ascending the steps.

"Beg pardon," I muttered. "Oh, hello, Chris! See you later!" And I hurried madly off up the village street, bearing with me a sort of instantaneous photograph of Chris's startled face and Gladys's look of apprehension.

I wonder if you know Shelter Island? But never mind; this is no place for description. It's a jolly place, though. Quaint and interesting, you know, with a breeze that smells of all sorts of pleasant things, the goldenest sunlight in the world and never a cloud to be seen. In half an hour I was back at the hotel, and had written my name on the register and was the proud possessor of eighty square feet of bedroom.

I found the folks on the porch; all of them, Jane, Aunt Leigh, Gladys and Chris. There was naturally some constraint for a moment, but I shook hands with Aunt Leigh, quite touched by her evident pleasure in my arrival, and then turned smilingly to Gladys. She was rather pale and held tightly to Jane with one hand while she gave me the other. If she was looking for a desperate and broken-hearted adorer she must have been surprised. I was never in better spirits.

"My best congratulations, Mrs. Roul-

ard," I said. "I hope you'll be very, very happy." Then I squeezed Chris's hand until he squirmed. "And the same to you, Chris. Let me know your address as soon as you settle on it, for I'm going to send you a present that'll make all your other presents look like the last things on a bargain counter!"

Chris gasped and muttered something and smiled idiotically, and we all went in to luncheon. It was a merry party. Talk! I never talked so much in my life! Aunt Leigh beamed and beamed, when she wasn't wiping a tear from the corner of her eye; Gladys smiled gently and happily; Chris grinned and Jane—Jane was just her dear self, looking out for everybody's comfort and laughing at my jokes no matter how bad. We drank the health of the bride and groom in champagne, and then I had the waiter fill the glasses again.

"And now another toast!" I cried. "To the bride to be!"

There was a silence. Chris and Gladys looked bewildered. Aunt Leigh smiled tremulously and searched agitatedly for her handkerchief. Jane blushed rosily.

"Oh, you dear!" cried Gladys, and, "By Jove, old man!" exclaimed Chris, jumping to his feet and wringing my hand across the table. Aunt Leigh dabbed her eyes quite frankly. Gladys smiled delightedly at Jane and Chris muttered, "By Jove!" over and over as though he was too astounded to say anything else. Then I issued invitations riotously to the wedding, to the wedding dinner, to the departure.

"And bring all the rice you like," I said joyfully. "I want everything proper and shipshape, and I don't believe a marriage is strictly legal without rice."

After luncheon Chris and I left the ladies to themselves and sought the billiard-room, ostensibly to play, but in reality to talk it all over. It doesn't matter what was said. Chris is one of the best fellows the Lord ever made, and even had I been the outraged and discarded suitor I was once supposed to

have been, I'd have had to forgive him. As it was, he gave me a catch in my throat once or twice as he spoke of Gladys. When we got through talking and shook hands we understood each other thoroughly. Then he went to find Gladys, and I to arrange for the trunks. Aunt Leigh was to go as far as New York with us, and when we returned from the honeymoon she was to join us again. At the office the clerk asked:

"Is this Mr. John A. Manton?"

I assured him that it was.

"There's a letter for you, then, sir; came a moment ago. I was just going to send it up to your room."

It bore the familiar coat of arms of the Quinepog Inn, and I was for dropping it into my pocket unread until the word "Haste" written in the corner met my eye. I tore open the envelope. Inside was a second envelope, a buff one with the words "Western Union Telegraph Company" across the top. Wondering, I opened it and drew forth the message and read:

JOHN A. MANTON,

Quinepog Inn, Quinepog, R. I.

No reason to hurry marriage. Will just found leaves you estate unconditionally.

W. H. WOODRIDGE.

When I came to I found myself a block from the hotel, leaning against a tree. I wondered stupidly why I felt as though the bottom had simply dropped out of things. Surely it was good news! The seven hundred thousand was mine, without restrictions, without conditions! There was no need to marry anyone. And there was the rub! I knew in that instant that I wanted to marry someone, would be eternally miserable if I didn't! And that someone was Jane Dederick!

I tried to think! If she knew of this it would be all off. The necessity of her to come to my rescue was removed absolutely by this infernal telegram. But supposing—supposing I said nothing about it? Supposing she were not to know—until too late. I was tempted, sorely tempted. I went on along the street, having it out with myself, arguing it this way and that, striving my hardest to make a dishonorable

action look honorable. I told myself that all was fair in love and war; that Jane had agreed to marry me and that the telegram made no essential difference. At the end of half an hour I turned sharply about and strode back to the hotel, about as miserable as they make them.

Jane was in her room. She and Aunt Leigh were busily packing their trunks. She saw from my face that something had happened, and her own face paled as she asked quietly:

"What is it, Jack?"

"I—I've had a telegram from Woodridge." I glanced appealingly at Aunt Leigh, and she, good soul, went into the bedroom, closing the door behind her.

"From the lawyer?" said Jane. "What is it?"

I held it out to her. She took it and read it with a frown. Then she turned to the window; the hand holding the message dropped at her side. A traveling clock on the mantel ticked horribly.

"Well?" said Jane without turning.

"Well," I said huskily, "you see it isn't necessary, Jane. And so—and so I came to tell you."

"You mean you want to release me, Jack?"

"I mean I do release you."

"And—you're glad?"

"It isn't a question of that," I said roughly. "The necessity has gone, and—so I give you back your promise."

"And—if I refuse to take it back, Jack?" she asked softly.

"What do you mean?" I cried hoarsely. "Jane, for God's sake don't fool with me!"

She turned and came back from the window, came to me with her hands outstretched.

"If I refuse to release you, Jack?" she asked with a little laugh and a little sob.

I caught her in my arms and the silly telegram fluttered to the floor. I showered kisses on her hair and cheek.

"Jane! Jane!" I cried unbelievably. "Do you mean it? Do you, dear? If I thought you did—!"

"If you don't think so," whispered Jane, "you'd better stop—kissing me!"

"You will marry me, Jane?"

"Do you want me to?" she asked, looking up at me.

"More than anything in the world," I said. "More than Aunt Amanda's fortune!" Presently she pushed me away, blushing, smiling, and crying a little, too.

"Oh, Jack," she said, "you almost make me believe you! But—I don't know—" she paused and frowned deliciously. "It—it was so sudden, Jack!"

"Sudden!" I said scornfully. "Sudden nothing! Why, I've been in love with you for—for weeks and weeks!"

Jane shook her head mockingly.

"It's worse than that, dear," she said. "You've been in love with me for two years! And, oh, Jack dear, I thought you'd never find it out!"

I was silent for a moment, dazed and wondering.

"Why, you're right, Jane!" I confirmed amazedly. "I always have loved you, I think! What—what a fool I've been!"

Jane drew my head down, and as our lips met she whispered with a little tremulous laugh:

"A wife should never contradict her husband, Jack!"

THE END.

MANHATTAN'S NEW YEAR'S EVE

By REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

HERE in the City of Unrest, where Time's gray glass so swiftly runs,
 From North and South, from East and West, are met the Ever
 Wandering Sons.
 Into this sea from all the world some day each troubled river flows;
 Into this hothouse garden come the broken pink, the ruined rose,
 The lad whose years alone are young, the woman slave who would
 be free,
 The tailored old who mimic youth, the grave-eyed Girl Who Used
 to Be;
 All they to whom the past years brought no gifts save failure,
 shame and scorn
 Come forth tonight to feast again—because another Year is born!
 The laughing street, the hurrying pave, the thousand crowded
 rooms that shine
 No more with lights than women's eyes and men's tense cheeks
 aflame with wine—
 What in this caldron do they brew above the crackling fire of wit?
 Salved lust and crudely mimicked joy and love in filthy counterfeit!
 This only? No, for still there flows, beneath the sirup they distil,
 The ancient Stream of Good that knows pollution from no pass-
 ing ill;
 The Stream that at the birth of Time God's own discerning hand set
 free,
 Which shall not rest till, at His word, all years and worlds have
 ceased to be.

DOCK O' DREAMS

By BEATRICE HANSCOM

O UR boats slip out upon the seas,
Great craft and small, tall masts and short,
Through calm and storm and favoring breeze,
To make some dock in distant port.
Some whimsy-sailed, some pulsing-strong,
While Hope, the stoker, feeds the fire:
A motley fleet, they all belong
To the great Line of Heart's Desire.

The Dock o' Love! But 'ware the tide!
The Dock o' Wealth! But 'ware the reefs!
The Dock o' Fame! 'Tis shoal beside:
Time's sands shift fast as men's beliefs.
So should we fail— Stand off! Bail out!
Stretch the worn canvas to the breeze!
Or patch the engine! Make it stout!
And sail undaunted over seas.
There is a harbor open wide
Our craft may reach and rest, it seems,
In spite of Time, in spite of Tide,
Safe-hawsered to the Dock o' Dreams.

The Dock o' Dreams, it stretches out
Uncrowded, though it hold a score:
By witchery it comes about—
There's always room to take one more.
Though bruised the hulk, though torn the sail,
Swift they're repaired as new, it seems,
To start once more, and if they fail,
They may come back to Dock o' Dreams.

The Dock o' Love! But 'ware the tide!
The Dock o' Wealth! But 'ware the reefs!
The Dock o' Fame! 'Tis shoal beside:
Time's sands shift fast as men's beliefs.
So should we fail— Stand off! Bail out!
Stretch the worn canvas to the breeze!
Or patch the engine! Make it stout!
And sail undaunted over seas.
There is a harbor open wide
Our craft may reach and rest, it seems,
In spite of Time, in spite of Tide,
Safe-hawsered to the Dock o' Dreams.

THE EARRINGS OF THE PRINCESS

By KATE MASTERSON

Notes made in the British Museum in Cargyll's sketch book.

FIFTEEN centuries before the star made a path for the wise men over the desert, two great shafts of reddish stone were quarried at Syene in Egypt and were floated several hundred miles down the Nile to Heliopolis, a city dedicated to the worship of the sun.

Thothmes III sat upon the throne, and by his command the great stones were hewn and carved with what in these days would be called a family tree. But Thothmes's tree reached the gods and star breezes blew through its branches. Eleven thousand of his slaves worked on the mighty monuments, which were set up during his reign in front of the great temple of the sun, where they stood for fourteen centuries during which the Greek reigned in Egypt.

In the eighth year of Augustus Cæsar, 23 B. C., the Roman emperor had the two obelisks removed from Heliopolis to Alexandria to adorn the palace of the Cæsars by the harbor. It was seven years after the death of that fascinating profligate Cleopatra, the last of the race of the Ptolemies.

She had whispered her whim for the big stones in the ear of a too-human king and her kisses had brought them to her very door, to hold her name and her fame as a great wanton fast for ages. It must be admitted that she was the greatest. And she liked mighty gifts like these from mighty men.

Here the shafts stood, wondering, long after the palace of the Cæsars had fallen. The sea washed in upon the land through hundreds and thousands of

years. Christianity dawned and the star broke in the East until, a matter of three hundred years ago, one of the great sun-worshipping pillars fell prostrate in the sand, wearied of time.

Napoleon conquered Egypt. Nelson destroyed the French fleet in Aboukir Bay, and later Abercrombie defeated the French army and rescued Egypt from its dominion. The fallen obelisk, half hidden in the sand, was seized upon as a great souvenir of a great battle.

It was towed out of the harbor of Alexandria in 1877 and after a voyage of twenty days, made heavy by its change from sun and sand to sea, it sank in the Bay of Biscay. Later it was found and towed to the coast of Spain, from where it was floated in an airtight cylinder to London and set up on the Embankment, where it stands today enwrapped in English mists, majestic, mysterious, terrible with age—for its age is thirty-five centuries.

Rameses II, next to Thothmes most famed of Egypt's monarchs, raised before the temple of Luxor two shafts, one of which pierces the sky. Nearly fifty years ago one of these stones, seventy-six feet higher than the one against which London's fog drifts, was taken to Paris.

These wonderful stones are but three of a great family. In the Piazza of Saint John Lateran at Rome a lofty spire cuts the landscape in two—the longest monolith ever quarried—one hundred and ten feet long, weighing about one hundred and fifty tons. It is known as the First Obelisk.

Hatasu, daughter of the first Thothmes and queen of Egypt, erect-

ed two obelisks in the Osiris temple of Karnak in honor of her father. One still stands a hundred feet in the air. It is known among Egyptologists as the Second Obelisk.

And from Alexandria Harbor, in Egypt, within the memory of many yet alive, the living monument of Cleopatra's whim—brother to the tired old shaft that after so many perils by sea was finally planted on the banks of the Thames with guardian sphinxes on either side—was brought, after much adventure by land and sea, to the New World.

Every fine afternoon hansoms and cabs and motors flash beneath its silent presence on the West Drive of New York's great park. It knows so much—it is so old, so gray, so wise!

It has seen palaces crumble, cities decay and nations fall and rise through the twilight of ages, and nothing matters much to it, for the history carved upon its sides is of kings long dead and in its way it is true to their memory.

It sees the new world rise about it and hears the crush and clang and roar and rumble of progress on all sides until the night falls and stars that it has known since they were born come out in the eternal sky. It stands guard beneath them until the rose tints touch the eastern horizon and then it warms and glows and glows, and pretty women taking an early gallop pull up and stare curiously at the carved embroideries of the Third Obelisk.

CHAPTER ONE

As his carriage turned from the Rue de Rivoli into the Place de la Concorde with the Champs Elysées beckoning him and the dusk of a Paris springtime enwrapping him in its perfumes, he felt that life was distinctly good, and he was conscious, for the first time that he could recall, of a joy in his youth, although he was quite thirty.

The freshly sprinkled tar pavement yielded to the rubber-tired wheels of his *fiacre*, the heavy scents of the dogwood trees and just a whiff of *sachet*

from a passing carriage intoxicated him and he heard music sounding dimly and sweetly behind trees in which hundreds of little starlights glittered.

His eyes, seeking rest, caught the gleam of the gilded hieroglyphics outlined upon the sides of the obelisk that graces that place—in the circle that marks the site of the guillotine—and he felt a chill creep up under his dinner coat.

Despite the characteristic touch of French gilt upon the antique shaft, baked to a whitish gray under many Paris suns, it seemed strangely out of place here until one thought of the ground upon which it had rested made rich with the blood of aristocrats.

Paris, he thought, was so filled with tremendous contrasts that it was one secret of its artistic charm. There was always its frivolity and its cathedrals—its cookery and its history—its Louvre and its Morgue. And here now stood this gray stone monument to a queen's vanity and a king's folly on its awful site, and Paris swept by for its dinner.

And around it—centering out from it as from a star, Paris throbbed with love and music and beauty, glittered with light, sung with laughter and reeked with femininity. Paris was feminine—that was it. Its crest should be a powder puff and a sauce ladle tied together with a bowknot of satin.

His eye just glimpsed the lettering on the side of the obelisk as the *cocher* drew up for a passing coach and four returning from the races. He read:

En Presence du Roi
LOUIS PHILIPPE, 1er,
cet obelisque
Transporté de Louqsor en France.

Then his carriage pushed on and he raised his hat to a very pretty woman, who smiled at him, but whom he could not for the life of him remember having met. He glanced back, but her faultless coiffure of coppery hair gave him no clue to her identity.

He was reminded then that he was on his way now to a naughty little restaurant in the Bois, where he was to be the host of the most alluring woman in Paris—in Europe some said—a serpent-

built creature, lithe as a mermaid, whose photographs smiled from the shops on the boulevards, always recognizable from the odd headdresses the woman wore, chains of antique stones that almost reached her low, level, almond eyes.

Cargyll was an American and he was not particularly impressionable, nor was he sufficiently old to appreciate the wonderful seductiveness of Mademoiselle Gervaise—who was, after all, a music hall singer. But he happened to be a story writer in search of material and of types that he was to put in a new novel for which the public, if his publishers were to be believed, fairly clamored.

Mademoiselle was a celebrity—the rage in Paris, and she was not the usual disappointing type of such women. He had found this out, sitting beside her on the club house piazza at Long-champs—with horses racing on the grass, about which nobody seemed to care particularly. Gervaise spoke English with a cunning little French twist and she had undoubtedly been very much taken with the broad-shouldered American who spoke such very bad French.

He amused her, and nearly every man bored Gervaise—especially the white-mustached men with titles who hovered about her in the obsequious and showy way in which mature royalty and rank bows to beauty in Paris.

The result of it all was that Mr. James Cargyll was now somewhat humorously considering what particular phase of a hitherto undeveloped desire for the company of feminine celebrities had led him to invite the pretty singer to dine with him—or had she asked him? He could not quite recollect.

The great race of the day had been run and won by an American horse, and the French dandies were leaning over the rails of the boxes pelting the animal with flowers as it was led back to the paddock, a pale, proud little jockey following.

It was a moment of general abstraction and Gervaise chose it to raise her

greenish-black, slanting-lidded eyes to Cargyll's, telling him of the wonderful melons which they had at Peron's—a restaurant to which he had not yet been—although he was visiting them all with the zeal of a *gourmet*, which he could not even pretend to be, as his knowledge of culinary affairs was of the slightest.

Somehow, then, it was arranged that they should dine there the next evening; should meet there, owing to Mademoiselle Gervaise's *matinée*, she to drive from the theater.

Cargyll had telephoned for a terrace seat, and now he was driving there with Paris in his blood to such an extent that he found himself humming a tune.

A boy selling valley lilies came up beside the carriage, despite the raised whip of the driver, and Cargyll laughed and leaned over, taking the whole armful of flowers, for which he gave the boy a surprising handful of silver.

The lilies were wet and fresh from the woody pools of the St. Cloud forests, where they had been plucked that morning. There was no hint of the white cheeks and heavy-lidded eyes and carmined lips of Mademoiselle Paris in their dewy freshness. They were redolent rather of a sweetness of sentiment and youth that made Cargyll sigh for the brooks and fish lines of his boyhood.

Their odor grew suddenly heavy and seemed to stifle him and his cheeks burned. Then he laughed, for he had often heard that Paris affects Americans this way. That his staid Philadelphia senses should riot in such a manner appalled him—he felt like an hysterical girl going to a party.

It was like the trance of a man's first moose—his first love—any of the events that stir up the emotions as though with untasted wine. And Cargyll's life had not been rich in emotional crises. He was one of the healthy, athletic men whose lives are filled with active interests and accomplishment to the belittlement of emotionalism.

He was quite aware, now that the first fumes of the lilies had passed and Paris was asserting itself once more, that the

existence of accomplishment, of ambition, and the energy that is called Americanism, leaves much of life untasted. Whether Wall Street or the football field chains a man, or a great ambition enthralles him—love must be secondary.

Great passions do not spring to life amid the hum of the tickers and the tingle of telephones. In a city like this, where the highest cult is enjoyment, ambition would grow dimmer and achievement impossible. One needed the clang, the rumble, the roar of New York, to stir on to deeds—to do things. Here life itself was quite enough.

And dreaming thusly he was swept on and along a little avenue hedged with trees—until his man drew up, with some state for a hired *cocher*, at an awning of red and white stripes fluttering in the evening wind. Cargyll recognized the music of an American cakewalk coming out through the new art doorways, and he paid his driver, canily dismissing him, and gathering his panama hat and his lilies in one arm he made his way up the white gravel walk.

His mind was not dwelling then on this somewhat unconventional entrance, which caused the waiters to stare with admiration, for Cargyll was very fit in his evening clothes and he was not built on the Paris plan. One would instantly detect him for an American, and so did a group of young people waiting within the *porte cochère* for Cargyll's carriage to make way for their motor—a big red touring car which now came up puffing to the door.

He became conscious of feminine laughter a bit muffled, and the idea came to him that he must look like an actor with the big bunch of flowers under his arm. He had an instinct to throw them away—then stiffened, and looked directly at a tall American girl in a white linen gown, whose face seemed to fairly glow out of a nimbus of brownish gold hair braided back to her neck and tied there with a stiff black ribbon.

He recognized Tyrell's sister at once, and then he heard Tyrell's voice sing

out, "It's Jimmie Cargyll," and his mate at college in boat race and ball field came out and gripped the hands of the big blond giant of his class. Cargyll turned, smiling audaciously into Miss Tyrell's eyes, and handed her the flowers with a bow.

CHAPTER TWO

MISS TYRELL dropped her lashes and then smiled into Cargyll's eyes as she took the lilies and raised them a moment to her face, then held them out for the inspection of another older girl, distinguished and foreign looking in her dress, although an instant's inspection of the features would show her to be a sister of the two gold-haired, gray-blue-eyed Tyrells.

Miss Tyrell presented him to Madame Chevalier—who had lived in Paris since her marriage four years ago—and then Cargyll remembered the wedding, although he had not been a guest, and he recalled rumors of unhappiness that had come to America now and then since this beauty of Baltimore forsook her American admirers for a foreigner.

She was still very beautiful—not so exuberant in type as her brother and sister—and very gracious of manner. She, too, remembered Cargyll very well, as did the younger girl, for he had been one of the famous athletes of his class at a day when college athletics ranked higher than now. But Tyrell's letters home had been filled with the prowess of his partner, as he used to call him, and while they had only met casually they knew him better than he imagined.

Cargyll had slowly and surely made his way in the field of literature, and the verses which he wrote were not so much distinguished for their grace or finish as they were for a delightful vein of girl worship—which the poet expressed in this way only. But women will always like that sort of thing and will invest their poets and writers as well as their actors with heroship.

So this meeting was more pleasant even than most meetings of Americans

abroad, who are apt to feel the warmest friendship for even their merest acquaintances of home, when they come upon them on foreign soil.

These young people knew each other and were unaffectedly glad to meet. It seemed odd to Tyrell to realize that his strong-armed chum of school had become considerable of a lion in the few years that had gone since their parting. He had to stifle an impulse to joke him about it, and then, with a glance at his sisters, he asked him if he had any dinner engagement.

The remark called Cargyll back to earth with a start. For the first time in several moments he recalled the fact that the hour and place for his engagement was there and now, and that the sinuous and radiant Gervaise might even then be awaiting him with glinting eyes.

He looked about the rooms nervously and rejoiced to see the Tyrells move for their carriage, unaware that his manner betrayed his embarrassment. He felt morally certain that the Tyrells would not understand Gervaise—or his dining with her.

Suddenly there was a distant pealing of musical bells from amid the trees, and the eyes of every one turned expectantly toward the roadway. A sensation of some sort was imminent. Cargyll thought he knew his Paris, but he had never heard of Mademoiselle Gervaise's famous team of mules.

They dashed jauntily in sight now, in their silver and white harness attached to a Russian cart—the driver and footman seated very high on the box in liveries of white and silver; the body of the cart low as a sleigh. Upon a white rug sat Gervaise robed in lace; her hat a huge lacy one, its brim flapping over her eyes—very much darkened eyes they seemed to be as they peered from her white face, the red lips parted in a confident and quite easy smile. This *bizarre* team of zebra-colored mules and the Russian carriage were the talk of London and of Paris.

To Cargyll's crude American eyes they looked somewhat suggestive of a circus. He felt the color mount to

his face in unexpected schoolboy fashion as Gervaise waved her white fan at him, smiling wickedly as though with a consciousness that he did not quite enjoy the situation.

Tyrell and his sisters followed her glance with some amusement—Tyrell emitting a long, eloquent whistle in a subdued key. Cargyll muttered an apology as he stepped forward to greet the gorgeous Frenchwoman and, as she alighted from her carriage upon a rug which her footman spread upon the marble steps for her feet, her equipage jingled away into the leafy darkness as though it was part of a pantomime.

At a signal from Tyrell the waiting automobile swung into place and he helped his sisters to enter, then turned with a nod to Cargyll, who was bending over the hand of Gervaise, heavy with antique gold and silver and dull stones. Apparently he was not heeding the departure of his friends.

Only once did his eyes glimpse the face of Amenra Tyrell, which had grown rather still and unsmiling in its aura of gold-brown hair. Her lashes had fallen again over her eyes, but this time with a different suggestion—a hint of indifference somewhat overdone and of amusing contempt all but concealed. Cargyll saw it distinctly and just as the big red car puffed into the Avenue it wheeled and then jerked somewhat suddenly.

As it did so he saw his valley lilies, which Miss Tyrell had carried, shoot rather suddenly over the edge of the carriage from her arm into the roadway, where they scattered their fragrance on the newly sprinkled earth, to be trampled under an approaching carriage. She had made no effort to recover them if they had fallen by accident.

Cargyll sighed over the lilies for the second time that evening. Then he led the way to the alcoved place he had reserved for dinner. He had not had an opportunity to ask for permission to call, nor did the Tyrells know his hotel. He must chance finding them again and explaining the situation.

But why should he explain? After all,

they were nothing to him but friends of days when life had been more constrained and filled with athletics and college affairs. This was Paris—and springtime. But there was something in Amenra Tyrell's eyes that would always remind him of valley lilies—and he felt that, as a story writer, it would be interesting to study out the reason for the mystery. Her hair, too, was rather remarkable and different from other girls. She had become, he thought, very beautiful since the day of the boat race when she stood waving a flag at her brother and him as they shot past her—and he remembered that her brother had said that she was an unusually serious sort of girl.

Then he felt the tap of a fan on his shoulder and, looking over the table at Gervaise, awaked from a dream, and again he felt foolishly young and American before this woman who dared to drive around Paris behind her wonderful zebra mules.

CHAPTER THREE

GERVAISE's taste in jewels was unique. It was part of her personality—in line with the up-to-date fad for individuality in style, in perfume and in clothes that fashionable Parisians were making such a specialty of.

Gervaise never wore diamonds, sapphires or any of the brilliant stones. Her rings and bracelets were heavy and a bit barbarous looking, set with black pearls or heavy opaques, carved with antique symbols. She even hung chains about her neck and her waist, supporting pendants of this kind, and when a Paris jeweler came across anything very antique and ugly he sent it at once to Gervaise, who was almost sure to buy it. She kept her jewels in cabinets rather than caskets like other women.

She had discovered very early in life that this Eastern style of jewelry was becoming to her exaggerated Oriental type. An artist had done a portrait of her with a single pendant hung by a chain beneath her eyebrows and it had

been the sensation of the Salon one year.

After that her fashion in gems was made and, while other women glittered with the scintillant gems, Gervaise allowed nothing to rival the brilliance of her eyes and the glint of her teeth beneath the scarlet lines of her lips.

Her regal manner of assuming queenship over the special world of Paris in which reign is difficult owing to the beauty and wealth and influence of the circle that composes and upholds it, had left her undisturbed on the throne.

She had made no enemies, not even of women whom she hated. When she made her appearance at the races, the fashionable restaurants, or at Monte Carlo, her doings were cabled to the newspapers abroad, for she numbered great editors among her slaves as well as statesmen and dusky princes from the East, many of whom she cultivated for the reason of the stones they owned and procured for her from the necks and heads of idols in temples where false ornaments were substituted for those that monarchs' hands had filched for her pleasure.

A queen of the half-world, she was, nevertheless, discreet as to her conquests. Though Paris marveled and wondered, it had no vulgar tales to tell of the establishment that Gervaise conducted with a houseful of servants and a stable and kennel that were the equal of the best.

She was conspicuous in charities and let no opportunity pass to open her purse liberally when called upon.

Just now she looked a little bit tired. She had seen the expressions in Cargyll's face that the American girl's presence had caused. And Gervaise rarely saw anything to admire in the plainly gowned and *gauche* American. This one had seemed to her singularly simple. Yet Cargyll's face had been most blank for that moment when his lilies fell into the roadway.

But she laughed instead of frowning as less clever women might have done, and she placed her fan and gloves together on the cloth and leaned her

chin in her hands, her elbows on the table.

"The little American girl," she said, "has the face of an angel—the Madonna of Boucher—have you seen it? No? A remarkable Madonna—not dolorous but amiable and piquante; but a still more remarkable American girl, eh?"

"Our American girls rarely retain their demure manner in Paris," said Cargyll; "as a general thing it is quite the other way with all of us. We become rather wild over here, and that is why the American girl traveling does not appear always to the best advantage."

"But when she wears our gowns"—Gervaise kissed her hand in the air—"she is adorable! She wears the gowns better than we do—that is why Paquin and Doucet prefer to dress them. They have not such good figures, but they have a style of their own—almost a swagger—that is very nice. I try to do it on the stage when I sing English songs and it is effective, but really quite different."

The waiter had begun to serve the dishes for which Peron was famous. The electroliers, fitted with shaded lights that looked like lotus flowers, shed a dim light over the table. The wine bubbled in high, odd shaped glasses. The voices of other diners and the laughter of women sounded about them and an odd, faint scent that Gervaise wore now and then touched Cargyll's senses.

He knew that he should never forget this night, not for its importance—that he did not dream of—but for its multitude of impressions—all new impressions of a city that has perfected the art of conveying its influences.

His brains seemed to cloud and float up from him in the air with the high notes of the violin, and he pushed his glass from him. It must be that the wine was going to his head. He said:

"A splendid fiddler and a fine fiddle!"

"It is Caregno—a Hungarian," she said; her brow wrinkled inscrutably; "have you met him? He is superb! He has been offered several fortunes, but he will not leave Paris. There! See

him now through the palms when that woman bends her head."

Cargyll looked across the room and saw a tall, slim, artistic looking man—more of the Italian than the Hungarian in type. He wore his clothes like a gentleman and fingered his bow with eyes closed. The women stopped eating to listen to him and look at him, their escorts forgotten.

Cargyll laughed softly at an expression that had come into Gervaise's eyes as she listened to the music. They had grown soft and their glinting had changed into a little blaze.

"His music is quite enough!" he said. "Why should he be so handsome?"

She frowned a little—just a little—at Cargyll's preoccupation. He was so absolutely and utterly unlike other men whom she honored with her society at dinner. Even Americans were never quite so rude as this. But, after all, he seemed more dazed than inattentive, as though his surroundings were so different from those he had known.

She snapped her fan to break his trance, and just then a messenger in livery came into the room escorted to their table by the head waiter, who apologized for the intrusion.

"For Mademoiselle Gervaise," he said, and the boy handed her a small parcel in white paper. "It must be delivered personally."

She took the package rather inquiringly from its tray and turned it over. It was odd that a package should have found her out at a little dinner like this that none knew of but her maid and her coachman.

"From whom does it come?" she asked the boy, in French.

He murmured the name of a hotel, saying the concierge had sent him and pointed to the band on his cap to identify him as a page of that house.

Gervaise slipped off the elastic band that tied the box and nodded to the boy to go. She took off the cover and disclosed a little mound of white wool on which lay a stone exactly like a black, green-marked beetle. It was old and carved with odd lines.

"How odd!" Gervaise's lips trem-

bled. "It comes from one of my jewelers perhaps—you know I am a collector of these old stones and they fairly pursue me—even at my dinner, you see, I cannot escape!"

She handed the box across the table to Cargyll, her soft hand touching his as she gave him the gem. He eyed it unknowingly.

"What a curiously ugly thing!" he exclaimed. "How can you like it?"

"Ah! but you do not understand, perhaps, how old it is," she exclaimed in a low whisper; "or, if it is one of the stones that I have been seeking for a year or more, what a power it is!"

Cargyll smiled again and turned it to the light. Beneath the wool was a bit of folded India paper. He removed and unfolded it, while she leaned across to see its inscription, which was in English in faded purple ink—but very legible.

Then, with a little murmur, half joy and half apology, she caught the paper from him. "Yes—it is the one," she said; "I have been searching for it for so long. It is one of the eardrops of an Egyptian queen, and I hope to get both, which were taken from the mummy at the same time and afterward separated. One is not good without the other."

Cargyll turned the soft, flat stone in his palm. "I am frightfully stupid about such things, you know," he said; "although I can tell a diamond."

Gervaise pursed her lips. "Diamonds are only bright glass!" she said; "they mean nothing."

"They mean large cheques in the country I come from," laughed Cargyll. He slipped the stone back on its wool bed. It had grown cold and dead in his palm.

"But I must have the other!" murmured Gervaise, her eyes still scanning the slip of paper. The waiter placed some fruit before them, but it was unheeded by her. Cargyll began to eat black grapes.

"Where is the other to be found?" he asked.

"Who knows? In Egypt, probably, or perhaps here in Paris. But if it

were in Paris I should have heard of it before. They have a history—you know—a wonderful history, and I have dreamed of owning them both. I confess now that I have a dread of this one—alone!"

Cargyll's smile broadened. This was not only incomprehensible to him but it was just a trifle boring. Evidently, Gervaise was quite as whimsical and as foolish as women are about trinkets—even ugly ones!

"Would you be afraid to keep it for me?" she asked suddenly, her eyes on his.

"Afraid!" He laughed boyishly and deliberately sipped his wine. He was a man again and no longer awed by this odd little woman. "Afraid! Of a bit of old stone? Oh, I say!"

"Then do keep it for me!" She pushed it again into his hand—retaining the little slip of paper which she thrust into her glove. "Keep it until I find the other."

"Or until I do," said he gravely.

"You?"

"Certainly—if you wish it so much! I was wondering what I should send you. I know you won't care for roses."

"Or lilies?" she said, with a parting of her lips and a glint of her eyes.

"Or lilies or orchids—or bonbons—but now that I know what you really wish for I shall try to get it for you."

"Thank you—but my agents have been years getting me this one."

"Nevertheless, I shall hope to have the pleasure of returning the pair to you within the year—shall we say the year?"

Gervaise's eyes sparkled. "And Americans keep their word!" she cried gaily.

"This American does," said Cargyll. He picked out one of Peron's choicest peaches and placed it on her plate, glad that the conversation was verging to normal again.

"But you do not know what it may cost you—I warn you!" she said; "you may have dangers to encounter!"

"All the better," said Cargyll; "I shall follow the quest to the end of the earth if need be. I am interested in your whim!"

"Why?" she said softly.

"Because," said Cargyll, "I am badly in need of a plot for a comic opera libretto and this promises better than anything that I have found in the way of material."

"Then you must have this memorandum," said Gervaise; "but promise me that you will not give up when you have read the history of the stones."

"I have already told you that I will get you the stone, Mademoiselle Gervaise," said Cargyll, "and I never break my word to a lady."

She handed him the little slip of paper with a smile. He folded it and placed it in his cigarette case without reading it. Then he looked rather impertinently across the table into her eyes.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities is not the most cheerful place in the British Museum, but it is, if anything, less soggy and serious than some of the other rooms. The British Museum is itself soggy and serious; its windows forever looking upon a vista of Bloomsbury boarding houses.

Bloomsbury has become known as the haunt of the American who comes abroad to live cheaply. The irresistible attraction that causes people of the same mind and level to unconsciously assimilate with their own kind has made Bloomsbury the Mecca of shilling savers.

Yet its appearance gives no hint of poverty. Its door handles and bells are as shining as they are in the West End, and white-capped maids open the door in place of the slavey that once was the type of London cheapness. For six shillings a day one can live in one of these irreproachable dwellings and have four soggy and serious meals.

But the neighborhood is blighted. It is no longer "good address," and no broughams stand before its doors afternoons at tea time. In and out of

the Museum studious eye-glassed persons flit all day long in search of unknowable information.

No frivolous looking girls or fashionable men ever loiter in these dim porticos. The men are all mummified of visage and musty of garb, and the women suggest scholastic achievement rather than domesticity or *chiffons*.

Cargyll was of the unaccustomed type and the Bobby at the door looked after him criticizingly as he went up the stone steps three at a time. Cargyll was in search of information on the subject of Egyptian jewels, and he was conscious that he was, through his new idea, developing lines of thought that he had never touched heretofore.

Yet now he was constantly reminded that Egyptology was one of the subjects in which great numbers of people seemed to be absorbed.

Cargyll hurried through his volumes of names, noting the titles of the books he was to order from Mudie's over the telephone. He was in a hurry to get through, for he was due at the Carlton for luncheon with Tyrell and he was over-eager to learn if Miss Tyrell was in London. He had thought of her often since the meeting in Paris and he had a longing to renew the acquaintance and win back, if possible, the regard of the young woman who had so cruelly reproved him at Peron's when she let his flowers fall from the carriage.

In some way she had left some charm on his imagination and it had grown more strong as the days elapsed after the meeting and no chance brought him again in the society of the Tyrells. It was more than a month ago that they had met and since then a certain dull and ugly but highly interesting stone lay in his waistcoat pocket as a charm—a love charm that had already begun to influence his life, for he had come from Paris to London for this visit to the Museum, thinking of the scarab's history even more than of the notes of his novel. He had decided to call it "The Third Obelisk."

It was not yet three—the hour set for his meeting with Tyrell—when he alighted under the glass awning door—

way of the hotel that London loves so dearly as a lunching place.

There were only a few people in the dining-room, although each table bore its engaged card. Outside in the carpeted and palmed lounge there were a few of the pretty, slimy looking English girls that one always sees here. American women browned from Continental travel and wearing their Paris clothes aggressively well, came in laughingly leading the way for their escorts in a manner that at once labeled them from the States.

Tired looking peers with single eyeglasses and the unmistakable bend of Piccadilly came in escorting pertly beautiful New York chorus girls—dressed in imitation of the English girls, with hats tied beneath their chins and little dogs under their arms.

This luncheon group at the Carlton each day during the season is distinctively Londonese. There is none of the atmosphere of Fifth Avenue—nor even a hint of the gaiety of Paris, but a certain subdued and undeniably quiet air, as though these people had after all come in to get a luncheon rather than to see or to be seen.

Tyrell came in late with an English officer, very tall and military, in his tweeds. He was introduced to Cargyll and the three young men went into the big room to find their waiting melons iced to overflowing. Tyrell took out a cigarette case and handed it across the table as the waiters served sherry and bitters, then drew it back with a laugh, for it was empty.

Cargyll dived for his and proffered it. The Englishman drew from it a folded slip of thin paper with a whistle, as he unfolded it. It was the memorandum which Gervaise had given him that night in Paris.

"What is it?" he asked curiously—with a rather forced smile. What might it not be indeed?

It was a typewritten copy of a clipping from the *London Times* and the Englishman, half in jest, began to read it:

- LONDON, JUNE 30.

There is in London today no living man

or woman who interests Londoners half as much as an Egyptian High Priestess who died nearly 4,000 years ago. She is, of course, now a mummy, and known by the officials of the British Museum as Exhibit 22,452. The history of this mummy from the time of its discovery until it was bought by the Museum is one of death and disaster, and after having been quiet for a long time its spell seems to have been at work again.

The gentleman who bought it from its Arab finder in 1864 lost his fortune within a few weeks, and shortly afterward died. Two of his servants, who had handled the sarcophagus, died within twelve months. A third has lost his arm, owing to a gunshot wound.

On being transferred to London the case brought unmeasured misfortune to its new owner. Then came a startling development which suggested a connection between these disasters and the mummy case.

A photographer who attempted to make a picture of it got a negative not of the cast of a face which is on the box, but of a living Egyptian woman, whose features wore an aspect of horrid malignity. Shortly afterward that photographer died.

The case was then transferred to the British Museum. The carrier who removed it thither died within a week, and one of the men who helped to set it in its place broke his leg next day.

Such is the record history of the coffin cover up to a few weeks since.

A gentleman interested in Egyptology desired a photograph of the mummy case, and a few days ago commissioned Mr. Manning, a well-known photographer, to take one. As the case stands in an awkward angle, Mr. Manning's son and his photographer visited the Museum together to confer as to the best means of performing the work.

When returning home in the train Mr. Manning, Jr., smashed his thumb so badly that he has not been able to use his right hand since. The photographer got home safely, but only to find that one of his children had fallen through a glass frame and sustained dangerous injuries.

Nothing deterred, the photographer returned to the Museum the next day and photographed the case. Lifting his head suddenly as he took the picture, he struck against the frame of a glass case and cut his nose to the bone. At the same time he dropped a valuable screen, which is rendered useless by the fall, and, to cover all, smashed the camera.

The earrings of the mummy were stolen during the transportation of the case to London. They consist of two scarabs carved with the deathless beetle and other symbols. In jewel history they are known as powerful love charms when combined; but unlucky when apart, the Princess having commanded that they should be buried with her body. One of them has just been purchased at a fabulous price for Gervaise, the Paris singer.

"To her very good health!" said Tyrell as he raised his glass, winking at Cargyll across the table.

CHAPTER FIVE

It is a matter of record that Cargyll's typhoid took him the very next day—after the reading of the history of the mummy. The fever of the Paris springtime had remained with him and for the first time in his thirty odd years he was ill.

Through weeks of burning delirium he lay in his hotel rooms in London with confused pictures running through his brain. Now he was talking with Gervaise about the jewel and again he was scouring Egyptian tombs in search of the missing stone. No one understood his ravings and his mind was not clear enough to associate the misfortune of his illness with the presence of the unlucky gem.

Through his unconscious, trance-like days there came brief, lucid spells and from his window he could look out at the sleepy Thames and he saw through the trees the old, gray Egyptian shaft that stands on the Embankment. His busy brain reasserting itself would begin to plan the story he was to write and he would call feebly to the nurse for paper and pencil, which were always denied him.

He recognized the Tyrells and Mrs. Chevalier, who came in softly whispering, and he was too weak to speak to them at first, but by degrees he came back to earth and found that they had delayed their sailing to New York on account of his fever.

By and by they took him one day in a train from Waterloo station to an old place down in Surrey where he sat under great trees all day and was made much of as a distinguished invalid, the news of whose serious illness had brought in heaps of cables and letters from different parts of the world.

He had that strange sense of awkward helplessness that comes to a man who is ill for the first time, but in some way it seemed quite natural that he should

be with the Tyrells and he allowed himself to drift in a peaceful convalescent dream; happier than he could understand when Amenra Tyrell sat beside him reading the American papers to him.

Then Bud Tyrell would come in fresh from a gallop through the quiet lanes, and the two men would talk of the old college times and the differences in athletics and games that had come with later seasons. Mrs. Chevalier would sit with her embroidery and discuss his forthcoming book that had not yet been put on paper and after a while he realized the delightful way in which they were systematizing their attentions to him.

It was a new life to Cargyll, who had lived a bachelor life ever since his college days. This charm of women's companionship at home had never been his and he fell under its spell and felt as though he did not deserve it all. He began to plan ways and means by which he could return all this kindness.

One day Miss Tyrell paused as she unfolded a Paris *Herald* and her face took on an amused and somewhat embarrassed expression. Cargyll glanced at the page and she handed it to him without a word. It contained a picture of Mademoiselle Gervaise with her almond eyes glinting under her queer headdress.

The paper stated that she had been married the preceding day to Caregno, the violinist, who for so long had been her admirer and who was so well thought of by music lovers in Paris. They were going to the Tyrol on a wedding tour. She was the possessor of a team of wonderful zebras and also owned one of the most valuable collections of antique jewels in the world.

Cargyll flushed and then smiled in his old, audacious fashion. Amenra Tyrell's eyes had leaped just once with something like joy. Cargyll's indifference to this piece of news had set at rest a certain idea that had come to her through the rumors of what Americans in Paris had called the young author's "infatuation" for the French singer.

She turned to the sporting column

and began to read the account of a pigeon shooting match in a studiously careful manner. Cargyll lay back in his cane chair thinking for the first time—half amused and half perplexed—of the mummy earring that the Frenchwoman had given him.

He realized with some astonishment that the ill luck of the stone had pursued him. But was it ill luck? It had brought him under the same roof with this clear-eyed, soft-voiced girl who now read to him here under this mellow blue sky drifting through the branches in shafts of light.

She paused and caught his intent gaze on her face.

"Thank you," he said; "I was just thinking how awfully good—you—you all are to me! How long has it been now—my illness, I mean?"

"Just six weeks," she said, smiling at him, "since we found you talking about Egyptian history and mummies and things like that."

"Ah—yes—and my trunks—and things are still at the hotel, I suppose?"

"I fancy so. Do you want Bud to get you anything?"

"No—that is—I have some golf sticks down there that I must have. I'll be playing in a day or two, don't you think? It must be stupid for you all giving up so much time—to me. I'll be about in a few days."

Amenra's eyes grew dreamy—misty almost. She said almost with a sigh:

"When you are about we fly—or sail—to America."

"No?" His face grew positively blank with the thought of it. What would his days be without the new life into which he had so comfortably drifted? How could he write his book? He grasped the arms of the chair as though for support.

"Yes—there are lawsuits in New York, I believe, that my sister has to attend to. We only waited, you know, to be with you. Bud thought—it better."

"I'm a selfish beggar, I know," said Cargyll, moodily; "but I can't stay here alone. I've grown so used to you—all—and it has seemed like a dream come true. I wanted so much

to see you again after that time—we met at Peron's, you know—I thought of you all the time—I—I—"

He stumbled in his speech and Amenra nodded silently. A thrush began to sing above them, but everything else around was strangely, eloquently still—a stillness that vibrated and made the girl tremble and wonder what it was he was trying to say. Men were very stupid—even a clever man like this. Then she felt her hands clasped and the paper fell to the grass.

"I can't let you go!"

It was a decisive sentence—but it was spoken haltingly, brokenly, and Amenra looked up with an odd little smile that seemed to be on the verge of tears.

"I suppose," she said, as though it had suddenly occurred to her—"that you might come too."

"May I?"

Cargyll caught her hands and kissed them several times. They were soft and sun-browned, but they reminded him somehow of valley lilies.

CHAPTER SIX

THEY were married at St. George's in London and sailed the same morning on the *Celtic*. The publishers were still waiting for "The Third Obelisk." The rapture of a real love affair had made the prospect of a written one unusually tame and uninteresting. But when they had honeymooned on the Bar Harbor cliffs and seen the polo at Newport and yachted on Long Island Sound, they came to New York and settled seriously in an apartment that overlooked the Park, the principal room of which was to be Cargyll's study.

On the cushioned window-seat Amenra sat one afternoon while her husband unearthed some long-forgotten notes from a book that he had taken one day into the department of antiquities in the British Museum. His wife called him to her side and pointed out a little golden spot shining amid the autumn tints of the trees.

"Guess what it is?" she said.

"The roof of the Casino"—he hazarded. "No—the top of the monkey house. No—then what?"

"It is the point of the obelisk—the Third Obelisk. Funny, isn't it?"

Cargyll laughed. "Events do seem to keep us in the trail of the old monuments," he said; "next year we shall journey to Saint Peter's at Rome and see the big one."

"Let us go over and see this now?" suggested Amenra; "I've never seen it close."

"They don't allow you on the grass; you must have a permit," he said. "I've tried in vain; but here is a photograph."

He took one from his desk and gave it to her. Attached was a leaf of paper showing the carvings that only showed faintly in the picture.

"That is so odd!" said Amenra; "here is that old beetle—the same one that is on my amulet—what does it mean?"

"Your amulet?" said Cargyll; he felt himself growing cold. He was thinking of an old, black stone that he still had somewhere among his boxes.

"Yes," said Amenra, and she pulled a little slender golden chain from her bodice. "My father bought this charm in Egypt. It had been taken from the mummy of an Egyptian princess whose name was the same as mine, Amenra—it is a love charm. Look, do you see the beetle?"

She held up a queer little black stone set in a circle of diamonds. "There is another somewhere," she said; "but it has never been found."

Cargyll took the amulet in his hand and turned it over thoughtfully in his palm. For a moment the room seemed to go round. He heard a violin playing; he scented tar pavements of Paris and heady valley lilies and a thrush's song, and then he looked up and saw his wife's eyes looking in his own.

"I have the other," he said; "odd, isn't it? I've had it ever since the night I met you in Paris!" He took her chin in his hand and turned her face with its nimbus of gold hair to the light. "I shall always call you the Princess Amenra," he said, gravely.

"But the beetle," said she; "what does it mean, anyhow?"

"Eternity," he said, and he kissed her eyes.

SAID LOVE TO LOVELINESS

By MADELINE BRIDGES

SAID Love to Loveliness, "Loose down thy hair—
Pluck out the golden comb, the band of pearl,
Set free the prisoned grace of braid, and curl
To fall or ripple as it may, or dare—
Unlace thy straightened girdle, and forswear
Jewel for neck and bosom, waist and hand—
The hidden beauty of thy feet make bare;
Be thy sweet self alone. . . . Dost understand
That only so, to Love, shouldst thou be seen
A beggar maid, that he may make thee Queen?"

Then Loveliness uptossed her charming head
"Why should I stoop to be a beggar maid?
For Love is, as all know, since Time began,
Suing to Loveliness, a beggar man!"

THE GIRL WITH THE ROSE

By MARION HILL

JUDSON JUREWELL, lawyer, had reached the age when he feared any day that his power to attract women would fall away from him, and he was therefore seriously constrained at every opportunity to put the matter completely to the test.

Men who have reached this age know its years to a certainty; it is not necessary to tell them. Those who have not reached the age have no foresighted belief in the possibility of its existence, and therefore take no interest in numbers. Let then the years to Jurewell's credit go unstated. Enough that he bore them not only lightly but well.

That he had an honored and adored wife did not interfere in the least with his conviction that he owed it as a positive duty to himself, in his pursuit of contentment of mind, to establish the fact almost daily that he could still make himself admirable in the eyes of some alien woman who was pretty enough and good enough to give intrinsic value to whatever concession she saw fit to grant him. That goodness was the determining quality governing his choice of a—well, subject—constitutes the uniqueness of Jurewell's obsession to make random love whenever the opportunity occurred; and times are never so slack as to render this particular opportunity hard to find.

In no detail of thought or deed was he capable of the faintest disloyalty to the home-enshrined woman who bore his name; but, so exigently did his profession advise the desirability of his divorcing his business self from his home life that he was practically two separate persons, and it amounts to an actual fact that during

the day he never turned from a foot-loose, shrewd-headed criminal lawyer into Betty Jurewell's husband till the very moment when his own front door closed safely around him, shutting the adventurous world outside.

In regard to a nickname, some women age so as to affront it, or to vulgarize it, or to render it ridiculous; but Jurewell's wife did none of these, and was as gracious a Betty now as she had been in the days of her somewhat distant girlhood. If she had faded, she had at least not done so destructively, like a flower, but rather with the fresh fairness and charm of an autumn leaf, owning her indisputable loveliness of middle life.

Jurewell admired her devotedly and revered the maturity of her intelligence; but—and this is understandable, too—he never went outside the ranks of youth in pursuance of his peculiar method of mental relaxation, the fresh aspirations of very young womanhood, its joyous anticipations and generous sharing of comradeship, all making up to Jurewell for any insipidity of thought incidental to adolescence. The insipidity growing too pronounced, he always philosophically recalled that he had to go home some time, anyhow.

Once there came a time, though, when he introduced himself to a combination of youth *and* ideas; and the entertainment to which he had looked forward did not entirely eventuate—there was too much pain with it.

They were both passengers on the boat, the girl and he. That is where he began to notice her, chiefly because she carried a single rose of great beauty, or, to be more precise, chiefly because she

carried it in a sheath of oiled paper, as if it had been a floral sandwich. He wondered why she did not throw away that hideous wrapping. Then he began applying his intellect to the small circumstance, and gradually arrived at the conclusions, generally sound, that she was a working girl, that her love of beautiful objects was far in excess of her means, that she had purchased the flower under esthetic compulsion, had paid a considerable sum for it, and consequently felt it incumbent upon her to give it all the protective attention in her power.

By this time Jurewell had waked up to the fact that the girl herself was far lovelier than the rose—a girl gentle-looking, yet radiant, shy and regal, wearing her patently cheap clothes with magnificent distinction. And not only was she flawlessly beautiful of face, but she possessed such a charming superabundance of life that she was positively electric. Her cheeks glowed, her hair was shining, her eyes shot sparks and she walked as if she had wings.

"After a long day's work, too!" murmured Jurewell in astonishment. "Probably in Hoboken."

He had spent the heavy afternoon there, coaching up some witnesses, and he was inclined to place that town and its representative brains under the ban of his extreme displeasure, and to feel a partnership in the misfortunes of anyone whose afternoon had been similarly located.

As a preliminary conveyance to her of some of the rights of this partnership, he turned an intent glance upon her, only to find that she had fixed him with a glance of equal intensity. This she at once withdrew, though without any vulgarity of embarrassment or haste. He, too, looked away, so as to ponder in comparative seclusion upon the extraordinarily communicative quality which her eyes possessed. He was quite used to being discerned impersonally, as if he were a decorative panel—as in a measure he was—but this girl's glance had pressed a personal claim upon him, had made a human

appeal to him, and he was naturally amazed.

After awhile, so as to discourage his amazement, perhaps to fortify it, he bestowed another look upon the rose carrier, and found, as before, that he was again the target for her disconcertingly personal scrutiny. Without a moment's further hesitation, he put a corresponding consciousness into his own gaze and frankly sent his spirit's message to her. Though she dropped her lashes swiftly, she was no longer unembarrassed, for a distressingly vivid color flamed slowly into her face and she caught her breath visibly. But, just where another girl would have found a beginning, she made an end, getting up quietly to join the people who were already anticipating the landing of the boat.

As a rule, Jurewell pointedly sat out these impatient ones. He held quite a theory that the man who is in the rear because he *chooses* to be there has an immeasurable advantage over the man who is at the head of things just because he's pushed. But tonight Jurewell elbowed his way up toward the front, keeping the girl always in view. He followed her with a sort of literary interest, obeying the demands of a suspended anticipation, just as he would methodically but inevitably have bought a magazine to see what came after the "To be continued."

Arrived upon the streets of the great city, what Jurewell wanted was the Staten Island Ferry, but he found that his need of the moment was expressed by the Ninth Avenue Elevated, so he unhesitatingly climbed aboard.

She was separated from him by a throng of "strap-hangers," and the car had made considerable of its progress uptown before he succeeded in edging himself into her immediate vicinity. Then, after having disdained several lesser advantages, he touched his hat with a casual, matter-of-fact deference, and sat down beside her.

"I beg your pardon—" he began, dissuadingly, noticing how resolutely she turned from him.

"I beg yours," she said, flashing

round upon him, "for I led you into making a mistake. And you *are* making one."

"Why, I don't think so," announced Jurewell judiciously. He was evidently addressing himself quite as much as his companion. "The biggest mistake a person is ever capable of making is often in refusing to follow a definite inclination; definite though unexplained—sometimes inexplicable. I have followed you through an inexplicable inclination. If I wanted to show you disrespect, I should convey the suggestion to you that your appearance was enough explanation. But I do not wish to show you disrespect. I repeat I have followed you in obedience to an inexplicable inclination."

He grew tired of this speech before she did. Repetition for the sake of clearness is one of the conversational failings of the legal-minded. She made no reply, but she bristled less hostilely.

"I wish you would give me the opportunity to prove to you that I cannot affront you," continued Jurewell. "Please let me talk to you and please talk."

"How did you know that I wanted to?" she asked. Her voice was splendidly modulated and bore the unmistakable ring of good-breeding and good sense, even while she was outraging both.

"Wanted to what?"

"To talk."

"Do you?"

"Oh, I am afraid so."

"Afraid!" He put the word on the scales of his mind and weighed it. When he saw the record on the dial he said quickly, "To talk to me?"

"Oh, to talk!" She fought against further admission.

The fighting settled it. "To me!" he remarked authoritatively. And this time she did not contradict him.

Between two people nothing more effectually kills speech than to admit a mutual desire for it.

Jurewell impassively matched his silence to the girl's until the One Hundred and Fourth Street stop, when she rose to leave the car.

"This is where I get out, too," he murmured apologetically.

Ignoring him perfectly, she made her way to the platform and started down the stairs, he painstakingly managing to keep always on the step behind her. Noting this, she withdrew herself and him from the throng by stepping aside on one of the landings.

"Is this your stop?" she challenged.

"No," said Jurewell. Then he made a gentle addition to the information, wondering whether it might or might not give him a species of claim upon her recognition: "My stop is the Borough of Richmond."

She merely resumed her way to the bottom of the steps. On the street she turned to him prohibitively:

"I will not be followed."

"You ought not to be," he corrected. Otherwise he was inflexible.

"I can prevent it."

"How?"

"By asking you to."

He considered the words. But he felt obliged to discount them. "I am afraid the course would be inoperative," he admitted.

"By asking you to come, I mean."

"Oh!" She had scored. The initiative was out of his hands, now. Dropping her defensive aloofness she suddenly addressed him with all the polished charm and poise of a society woman, asking, her hand extended in courtesy, "Will you do me the favor—for it will be a favor—to come home with me?"

Home! Judson Jurewell recalled a few things. The law as a profession is inimical to domestic regularity, one of its disadvantages being that it prohibits its votaries from predicting with any certainty to the one concerned whether or not they are likely to get home to dinner; it has compensating advantages, however, along the same identical lines: Jurewell's wife would not expect him until she saw him.

"Thank you; I will come," he said. He accepted the hand immediately and as immediately released it. Jurewell knew admirably how never to lose an inch of ground.

He took his place quite naturally by her side and they walked on together, not wasting words in premature conversation.

"I like to live in sight of the Cathedral," she said once, looking wistfully at its fragmentary silhouette. "Its size alone is calming, dwarfing petty things."

"You are not religious?" He made a masterly effect of masking this assertion as a question.

"No," she said; adding rather sadly, "but I would be—were it not for religion."

"The difficulty being—" he insinuated.

"A religious person should be free, and religion puts up bars; a religious person doesn't want to be thinking of sin all the time, and religion keeps a calendar of sins forever before the eyes."

"With directions for committing," mused Jurewell.

"Yes," she said impatiently.

She had turned down a side street and now stopped at the first door belonging to a big building full of cheap but "genteel" flats. She let herself in and ushered him to her own apartment.

"Take off your overcoat," she said, with brief hospitality. Then rather wistfully, "Please try to feel at home."

She slipped her flower into a tall glass, passed through an undraped alcove or two and proceeded to light the gas under a tea kettle. She was visible all the time; there is no getting out of eyeline in that style of flat.

"I am to dine," considered Jurewell. He held his hat and coat for a moment or two while he glanced around for a hook. However, it was a flat where one was expected to drop things, not to hang them up, so Jurewell put his belongings on the radiator. Everything goes on the radiator—the butter in the summer, the family wash in the winter; thus he theorized while he looked keenly about him.

The parlor was not much more than a bit of floor space around an incongruous upright piano. The inevitable marble shelf under the inevitable mirror was simply a roost for books. He noticed

that the Pagan-Christian, Stevenson and the Christian-Pagan, Aurelius, were cheek by jowl with each other; there was Emerson, of course, it being a woman's library, and there was Thoreau, which was better; also Ruskin, equally of course. There were Browning and Whitman on top, while Tennyson and Longfellow were quite at the bottom of their pile—but they were there.

There were two pictures on the walls; one was a Correggio Madonna and the other was a copy of St. Gaudens's Stevenson. She was evidently fond of Stevenson. Helping out the Madonna was a tiny crucifix on the wooden center-table; but beside the crucifix was a diminutive copy of Ricard's Devil, portraying him in his moment of almost angelic sorrow.

The place lacked feminine touches, but it was rigorously clean. It was a desperate spot to weather out an existence, being maddening in its constriction: one could sit in the parlor window and throw a wad of paper into the kitchen sink.

"A hot-box for morbidness," thought Jurewell regretfully. He looked up at his hostess, who now stood beside him. "But you are not morbid," he granted aloud.

"Only because I am healthy," she replied. She showed no surprise at his detached remark, having apparently followed the processes of mind leading up to it. "Will you take a cup of tea with me?" she asked imperturbably.

"Nothing would delight me more," murmured Jurewell.

"A good dinner would delight you more!" she flamed. "Don't try to deceive yourself or me by saying conventional things. Convention would not permit this visit; then I, in turn, forbid its intrusion in my home!"

"Nothing would delight me more than to take a cup of tea with you," amended Jurewell, sticking to his original words, yet magically erasing the conventions.

To his surprise and pleasure the anger on her face broke up in a gleam of laughter. The sight of it and the

sound of it were both extremely pretty.

"The rudeness of that made it funny," she explained. She was quite grave again as she seated herself opposite to him at the table.

"Rudeness!" he protested.

"Oh, I like the word 'rude' because it is the opposite of the word 'polite'—the biggest lackey of a word in the language."

"So it is," he discovered suddenly. He tried his tea, not that he wanted it, but the occupation kept him from too helplessly wondering what they were both doing there.

However, his hostess was nerving herself to be explanatory. Her brooding, beautiful eyes took him unflinchingly into her confidence. "I want to start without concealments—except necessary ones—and so I shall tell you to begin with that I am married."

Her pause recalled to Jurewell his own remissness in the trifling particular, so he said likewise, "So am I." He let the contribution drop softly, not desirous that it should tinkle too loudly. It sounded like news to him.

"I hoped you were. You could understand better then. I am separated from my husband—forever—I have run away from him—"

Jurewell put out a deprecating hand. Not only did his courtesy dislike hearing such things from a woman, but his professional caution also advised against too much talking along certain lines.

"I *have* to tell you. It belongs to you—to know. It belongs to me—to explain. I ran away because he was not fit to live with. No man like that shall support me. So I came to this city and found work. He is rich. His people and mine—that is the horror of it—mine!—want me to go back to him. I shall not do it. I have run away from them all. I found what I wanted—the pride of being self-supporting and the peace of loneliness. Then, next, I found the *shame* of being self-supporting and the *anguish* of loneliness."

Jurewell looked up quickly. "You need not tell me any more unless you

wish. I think I comprehend; the madness of silence was upon you—you have been jailed—solitary confinement—for so long that when you saw me in the crowd, a friend, you called me to you."

A storm of tears came suddenly upon her; she twisted her lithe young body around, put her arms on the chair-top and hid her face in them, weeping quietly.

Jurewell stirred his tea. It was the best that he could do. He was never cruel or stupid, or he would have gone to her and comforted her.

"Perhaps you had better tell me," he suggested presently, knowing that just as she had talked herself out of composure so could she talk herself into it.

"I am employed in a factory," she said obediently. She gradually faced him and was controlled. "The work is not disagreeable, nor is it hard, and the salary is good; that is why I stay. But I am not used to the people I am thrown with, and—doubtless I am unjust—I think they are terrible. Terrible! The girls chew gum and drink beer, and they even smoke the men's cigarettes. And the men—" Here she shivered and locked her lips. Not even as a topic of conversation would she permit them at her tea-table. "And the talk is worse than terrible. It is nothing but evil tales. I thought I could keep myself out of it by never saying anything—to them—or about them—or about myself. But they even talk of me—in lies—perhaps for the very reason that I have given them no cause."

"The only people who ever succeed in stopping the mouth of scandal"—he hesitated.

"Are—who?" she queried eagerly.

"Those who furnish it with material too utterly unfit to repeat," he concluded with stolid philosophy.

She had a happy trick—so he found—of laughing in the very places where a denser person could take affront. And again the gleam of her lovely smile brightened her features.

The smile wrung Jurewell's heart with pain, where the tears had not. The pain was for her, who was so evi-

dently made for joyousness; and it was for himself as well.

Now—all men have an ideal. That their wives rarely conform to it is logically due to the circumstance that the surprise occasioned by the fact, when established, that an ideal's antithesis possesses a charm likewise of its own, is often the occasion for an unpremeditated but adamantly successful proposal of marriage. Thereby is a man's ideal rendered unattainable and consequently ever-haunting.

This rose-girl was Jurewell's ideal woman, unmet till now. Much more could be said here; but nothing should.

"The shadowy third," he quoted recklessly.

She looked at him questioningly.

His sole explanation was to give the line its setting.

"When two lives join there is often a scar;

They are one and one, with a shadowy third."

She saved him the following line by giving it herself, and giving it, too, with a sword-thrust of hinted meaning applicable to the very moment:

"One near one is too far,"

she said. She scorned to evade the least responsibility; her direct glance never wavered.

Jurewell made a desperate attempt to stir his tea again, but the cup was empty. She smiled faintly and rose from the table. He stood aside like a courtier to let her precede him into the barren parlor.

"You cannot pretend to be refreshed; I am glad you do not attempt to say so," she observed. Her lack of viands made her overproud.

"But I am. For . . .

"Never yet hath mortal drunk

A draft restorative

That welled not from the depths of his own soul."

"That sounds like Goethe. How do you remember things—by the word—the way you do?" Her tone was impatient. "It hardly seems natural. It takes some of the sincerity out of them."

"It is my business to know applicable quotations," he said excusingly. "I

happen to be a lawyer. I have to know a great many things. No man gets a better education from the world than a lawyer—a practising one." He made this addendum thoughtfully. "To know poetry is very necessary, for a lawyer; almost anyone else gets along better without it. I learn every quotation for a purpose."

He sighed, wearied with his own tediousness. He was always tiresome when conserving truths, and always brilliant when juggling with them.

"To use what one knows—that is life. My existence is very death," she cried.

She seated herself in a stiff little chair beside the piano, her wonderful face showing like a cameo against its somber background. Jurewell also seated himself—thankfully. He knew there was more to be said to him.

She knew it, too.

"When I saw you on the boat—" she began.

He nodded. She was going to commence at the commencement—at last.

"I was feeling starved for a gentle human word; insane with desire to hear the voice of, and to talk to, someone whom I—liked; someone who would neither counsel, nor combat, nor even sympathize—but would merely understand, *understand!*"

"I know!" threw in Jurewell intently. The mystic bond of perfect comradeship revealed to him much of what was coming, and he leaned forward in his chair to be nearer to it—to welcome it, with exultation and reverence.

"There seemed to be no one alone in the world, except just myself. Everyone was going home—to someone. I was going home to no one. No one was coming home—to me. Just fancifully, at first, I looked the people over, wondering which one, if any, I should chose—to be coming home—to me. And I saw you."

The cold composure of her voice shook suddenly. Jurewell locked his hands in front of him and studied them closely. She had fastened a medal of honor upon his breast, and he had no words for the gift.

In the brief pause he thought a most astonishing medley of chaotic things; things having nothing to do with the moment—apparently. He thought that it would surprise many a wife to know how often her husband incidentally concluded he probably would not see her again—being brought back to her by the mere convention of the homing habit rather than by any golden, conscious yielding to the coercions of affection. He thought that what is customary has a mighty strength of its own, through its stolid convenience—that it makes even better for morality than do morals—that if the uncouth were as facile as the customary, the latter might not so often happen. He thought, too, of the general idleness of convention; how some people use only the most circumspect words, but hitch to them whole freight trains of wrong and ruin; how other people could use unwise words for the revelation of a soul as sweet and fair as a rose.

"I hope you are not afraid to go on," he said, almost roughly. "It would spoil it all—to be afraid."

"I am not afraid," she said very gently. "I stopped because I thought I had told it all, but perhaps there is more—"

"I think there is more."

"What I wanted of you was so simple a thing that money could not buy it. That made it unattainable—priceless. Money could not buy it. I wanted just a moment of friendliness. I got to thinking. The impulse in me came from what was good and human; it was the goodness, the humanity, in you which strengthened the impulse; what was evil and cruel—in other people—restrained me from speaking to you. Then the—you called it madness, did you not?—the madness came upon me and I rebelled. I said: 'He shall come, I will make him.' And I did."

He fancied there was a tinge of self-accusation in her tone, so he said quickly, "It was I who followed you."

"Only because I wished it"

By a resolute assumption of the blame she exonerated them both. Her

thoughts busied themselves doubtless with the problem of the world's fortunate censorship, for she cried out impatiently:

"Oh, to be old—and dead—and done with it all!"

"Do not wish your life away," he observed slowly. "My sorrow, of this very moment, and of every moment, is that I cannot go back to the beginning and live my life over."

"To what end?" she protested.

"Who knows?" he parried. "Perhaps to correct my mistakes."

"Oh, yes; *that*," she agreed readily.

Jurewell let it drop; but he was honest enough with himself to doubt that any such resurrectionary career would be entirely likely for him. The man who says he wishes he could live his life over in order to correct his mistakes, more probably covets that opportunity to go back and commit an improved fresh lot.

"Show me a final patience," she said, rising suddenly and taking a sheet of music from the piano. "Let me play you something. I do not wish to entertain you—no, no—but let the music speak to you of something for which I have no words."

"How do you know that I will comprehend?"

"I am taking the chance. The music is 'Warum?'—the Why asked by Schumann."

"The 'Why' asked by each and all of us!" he supplemented.

She caught a glad breath. "I knew you knew!" She seated herself before the keys. The almost stern abstraction of the true musician overshadowed her face. "This," she said, touching the page to indicate a certain phrase of harmony, "is the why, the ever-unanswered question. Listen for it. You will hear it ten, twelve times in the one-page fragment. It will grip your heart like a hand of ice. There's no escape. Here," and she enclosed a few other bars, "are the two voices of the universe—the man's voice and the woman's. Together they seem, but only for the briefest moment of melody, to have answered the question. You are glad

for them, glad! But it creeps in again, that question, unanswered, and answerless. It keeps them apart. And there is the drip of tears—here and—here. The end is one cruel note—cold and terrible—and the hand of ice is on the heart again . . . I am not making this up. This is all in the music. You will hear it."

And he did. As the spirit of the dead master sounded through the room, its trivial walls fell apart and it became wide and grand as life itself; wide, because of passionate promise, grand with the renunciations of fulfilment. The unanswered questions are the ones which keep us struggling upward; the answered ones are put aside and forgotten. And "the drip of tears"—he heard it clearly, and he winced from it as one does from the sobs which creep from under the doors of the Children's Ward in a hospital, where one is powerless, powerless to help. He bowed his head for the final note. It came. And she was right. The hand of ice had touched his heart indeed.

He shoved back his chair gratingly, and stood, filled with the restlessness of it. She stood, too, and faced him, pale and triumphant. "You heard what I would say to you?"

He acknowledged it. "I heard."

But she wanted fuller surety. "You heard the music of Schumann, yes; but I wove into it the things I *am* afraid to speak—*my* message to *you*. Did you get it—all?"

"Yes," he answered evenly. It cost him an effort. But he saw clearly that she was going reckless lengths merely because of a magnificent faith in his generosity of comprehension. She *knew* he would not presume—therefore he would not. "Yes, I got it—all."

At this, though a great gladness leaped into her glance, she turned away abruptly, putting the little table between. "Then—good-bye." She picked up the tiny cross and turned it idly in her fingers.

"Why should it be good-bye?"

"Must it not?" She evaded the responsibility and made it his.

His hesitation amounted to none at

all. Much of his life's business concerned itself with the sordid disentangling of mischief and misery caused by too quickly conceived friendships.

"Yes," he said. "It must."

"Go thou before, and leave me to my crucifix,

Whose pallid burden, sick with pain,
watches the world with wearied eyes,
And weeps for every soul that dies; and
weeps for every soul in vain."

She drew her brows in dissent and perplexity. "I cannot place that—nor agree with it."

"Cannot place it?" She had placed the others.

"No."

Then he remembered its source and said emphatically, "No; you cannot."

"What's the rest of it?"

"That's the end." He used this truth conclusively. The end. The words warned him. He searched the room with predatory glance. "Give me something of yours—to take with me. I want to remember."

She passed the little books where his glance somewhat lingered. She broke the rose from its inordinate length of stem and put it into his hand.

He admired the sanity which even in an emotional crisis prompted her to minimize conspicuousness. A beflowered man of middle age is in line for the world's attention.

"Not a book; a book lives too long," she said, a trifle incoherently. "Please take this rose. Remember me—and oh, with kindness and with what respect you can!—for as long as it remains a rose, its leaves unfallen. For that little while I want to be in your thoughts—perhaps in your heart. It would grieve me to know that you forgot me from the very moment that my door closes upon you. But when the petals drop—tomorrow—maybe, or the day beyond tomorrow, then brush them away, and put me, too, out of your life and from your memories. I do not belong in either place. Good-bye."

When he reached home that night he still carried the rose. His wife took it from him.

"How very beautiful!" she said, albeit casually. "Where did you get it?" This was more searching.

Then Jurewell put up a man's safest bluff in troublous times: he told within limit, the exact truth—than which there is nothing that really tells less.

"A very pretty young woman gave it to me. I never saw her before—and shall never see her again," he said.

The ring of regret in his voice startled even him.

"But she attracted me strangely. And I invented a pretext for speaking to her. We had very much of a talk.

And she gave me the rose—at parting—in lieu of a good-bye."

Smitten with retrospect, he gazed rather absently before him. His wife shot him a swift glance of quite chivalrous comprehension and then proceeded with the tactics which undoubtedly had done much and would continue to do more to safeguard both herself and Jurewell from harm.

"It is very beautiful, Judson," she said gently. Then, without a comment upon its history, she carried the flower to her husband's private desk, put it into water in his favorite vase, and set it intimately beside his best-loved book.

FROM AVIGNON TO TARASCON

By THOMAS WALSH

FROM Avignon to Tarascon,
 Psalms have died away to laughter;
 Spire and turret and *donjon*
 Echo but some *rigadon*
 Careless of the Great Hereafter.
 Never more reflects the river
 Tonsured head or plumèd one;
 Pope, and monk, and lord are gone,
 Troubadour and hearty-liver,
 From Avignon to Tarascon.
 Yet today the Rhone goes singing
 Just as though no Papal John
 With his huntsmen's clarion
 Ever set its woodlands ringing;
 Just as though no rogue in iron
 Challenged here, nor amazon,
 Grave, demure, or full of fun,
 Proved half deaconess, half siren.
 From Avignon to Tarascon
 Sun and vineyard still betray man—
Château-Neuf's red juices run—
 Brigand still is Cupidon
 To many a lass and godless layman
 From Avignon to Tarascon.
 Ah—what rosy sacrileges—
 Broken vows—we've left upon
 Lips of Jeanne or Marthe-Yvonne,
 Floating past the blossom hedges
 From Avignon to Tarascon !

"ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS"

By ETHEL M. KELLEY

"**M**ISS MABEL N.—All cultured men
Who wear a beard now, trim it;
And I should judge for boiling fudge
Ten minutes was the limit."

"**GREAT ANXIOUSNESS**—The bathing dress
Is for the seashore chiefly.
KENTUCKY BLONDE, and **READER FOND**,
Please state your questions briefly."

"**PEARL MARGUERITE**—Now obsolete
Is the expression *gum shoe*.
MISS TRIXY BEAU—Wear your hair low
Or high as it becomes you."

"**MISS ALSO RAN**—The richer man
Would make your comfort surer—
But since he shows he won't propose
Why don't you take the poorer?"

"**SWEET EGLANTINE**—For girls of nine
The dress above the knees is.
Don't wet the curls of little girls,
They rattle when it freezes."

"**MISS BEAUTY BEAST**—Potato yeast
Is a most healthful leavening.
Say to a host, 'I've had a most
Delightful time this evening.'"

"**TO ALL MY CROWD OF GIRLS**—I'm proud
To get your letters, dearies.
I wish I might be expedite
In answering your queries.

"Unfortunately I must wait
(So much my space is stinted)
Six months or more of time before
Your answers can be printed."

*Oh, human nature's very odd
And subile the attraction
Of wisdom that we cannot prod,
Authority that's born abroad,
And yet, "PERPLEXED," and "ANXIOUS MAUDE,"
Where is the satisfaction ?*

BRINTON'S PIPE DREAM

By STODDARD GOODHUE

"I'LL do it! By Jove, I'll do it!" Brinton spoke the words slowly and with insistent emphasis; he repeated them still more insistently.

"I will, by Jove!" he said a third time, drawing the words out in a manner peculiar to him, with none of that declamatory fervor with which persons of wavering will-power are wont to fortify their resolutions. The very softness of voice of the utterance gave assurance—or would have given assurance had there been a hearer—that the resolve thus made would not lightly be given over.

There was, however, no hearer. Brinton was merely soliloquizing. As he spoke, he regarded with seeming affection a disreputable-looking pipe that he held in his hand; and his eye wandered, just a bit ruefully, to a row of its fellows that decorated the wall beside the mantel. Then he took a puff at the pipe, and leaning back watched the smoke curl up, peering into it with the far-seeing eye of the day-dreamer.

For perhaps half an hour he sat there, looking most of the time at a certain photograph that smiled down at him from its place on the mantel. Then he rose slowly, his face bearing a half-whimsical smile. He stood for some minutes, with folded arms, in front of the row of pipes, regarding them with an expression between amusement and sorrow.

"It's all over between us, my boys," he said presently. "She doesn't like you; and what she likes decides things for you and me. She hasn't exactly said so, you understand," he continued

confidingly, as if the matter must be put in exactly the proper light. "No, she hasn't said so at all; but there's a hint in this letter I have here"—tapping his pocket—"that shows how she really feels about it, and hints go, do you understand?"

The parties addressed said nothing. Brinton gave them full time to offer any comment or suggestion that they might think appropriate, but they appeared to think it useless to argue a case with a man in that frame of mind.

"Nothing to say, eh?" he queried presently. "All right; we'll consider it settled. All is over between us, after these years of companionship. All is over; or will be after tonight. You're welcome to stay right there in your old places, but I'm going to break you of that vile tobacco habit. It's bad for you and me, that habit, and you've long known it. See how it blackens up your faces, and scents your breath—and mine. She calls you 'horrid pipes,' and I guess she knows, for she saw you that time she was here. So you do penance there on the wall in future. We'll have a farewell love feast and a smoke all around tonight—then we'll go our several ways."

For some time Brinton stood regarding his old friends, but saying nothing further. Then he took them down, one after another, and filling each one with tobacco, he ranged them before him in line on the table.

"You shall have half an hour each, by the clock," he said. "Some of you are older than others, but there shall be no favoritism; thirty minutes apiece, no more, no less."

There were ten of the pipes, so it

was just after two in the morning when the pipe fiesta was over. It is evidence of Brinton's long familiarity with the weed that he felt no bad effects from this prolonged indulgence. On the contrary, he felt in a particularly amiable mood. He had mused long and fondly on his ideal as the fumes thickened. He had made no mention of the intended sacrifice in the long letter he had written in the course of the evening nor did he intend to mention it in any subsequent letter. That should be a pleasant surprise for the dear girl when they met next fall. In anticipation he could hear the dear voice caroling his praises and expressing delighted surprise that he should have made this greatest of sacrifices for her. So with an approving self-consciousness to support him, and a confident expectation of a more tangible reward, he laid aside the last pipe without a sigh of regret, and went to bed.

It is one thing to resolve to give up the tobacco habit; it is a different thing—so a good many people have found out—to keep the resolve in a healthy state of preservation. And when, as in Brinton's case, the habit is inveterate—when you have been accustomed for many years to all but sleep with a pipe in your mouth—the effort to reform involves a struggle that is out and out heroic.

Brinton was made aware of this through many a painful week. He was a man who prided himself on his power of will, and not without reason. But his self-dependence was now put to such a test as never before. He kept the pipes in their old place, and his tobacco box was always full for the use of his visitors, who were urged to smoke as of yore—and who not only acted on the invitation, but bantered their host on his abstinence into the bargain. It required no very keen powers of divination to guess the cause of this wonderful change of habit; and the world is always amused at the sight of a man of Brobdingnagian dimensions and of unusual self-assertiveness enchained in the meshes of a Lilliputian sprite in a petticoat. So naturally the

friends got what amusement they could out of the situation.

But Brinton was proof against their badinage, though the fumes of their pipes sometimes drove him near distraction, and at times his nerves did show a propensity to get close to the surface. His worst trials came when he was working by himself. As he stepped back from his canvas—he was a painter by profession—to view an effect from a distance, he found himself again and again automatically reaching to take the pipe from his mouth—where it was not; and half a hundred times, when in a brown study, he put out his hand to take one of his old friends from the wall. But he always caught himself in time; and the pipes were as effectively cured of the tobacco habit as had been threatened.

It was a good while, though, before their owner could work with customary diligence and efficiency. A good deal of time he spent pacing back and forth to ease his nerves, and there were hours when a long run in the park seemed the only sedative that met his needs. But he never for a moment thought of wavering in his heroic resolve, and as time went by the acuteness of his suffering decreased. At last he could work once more as of old, and his nerves stopped jangling, and life in general took on a cozier hue. Finally it came to pass that he could honestly say to himself that he did not care to smoke; that the odor of tobacco roused not even a reminiscent longing; that the habit of smoking had given permanent place to an equally fixed habit of not smoking. But as he looked back upon the weeks of trial, he could say with equal honesty that it had been the severest physical and mental ordeal of his life.

Not many weeks after the miracle had thus been completed, Brinton took the train one day for the West. After journeying at what seemed to him a snail's pace—though it was really facilitated by the Chicago Limited and the Omaha Flyer—he found himself disembarking at the station of a mid-

Iowa village that was his destination. Every stick and pillar of the place was familiar to the traveler, for the little town was his native hamlet, and there had been little change in anything visible from the car windows during the years since he had migrated, and no change at all since the time of his last visit. But even had there been many changes, he would not have seen them, for his eye searched only for a single object, and, finding it, could see nothing else.

The object in question might perhaps better be described as a vision—a small, airy vision all in white that floated up to Brinton with both little hands outstretched to take his, and with a radiant face of really ethereal beauty, and big eyes like those of the photograph on Brinton's mantel, only more so, and teeth of pearl, and cheeks like coral from the Bay of Naples. Such at least was the apparition as Brinton saw it, and even the coldest-blooded on-looker probably would not be greatly disposed to quarrel with the description.

The Vision proved itself to be altogether human, however, by calling out, "Oh, Jack! I'm so glad!"—and then by adding in great haste, "No, no! Truly you mustn't, *here!* Everybody's looking; really, really!"

There was no such embargo of unwelcome witnesses, however, in the parlor at the home of the Vision after dinner, and it was not until Brinton had availed himself of the privilege of the accepted suitor in measure commensurate with his long deprivation, that the Vision found opportunity to relieve her mind of the suppressed excitement under which it had all the afternoon been exercised.

"Jack," she said, waving him to a safe distance, holding her little head on one side with a coquettish toss that made her all the more irresistible, and menacing him with a slowly moving finger, as one scolds a pet dog; "Jack, do stop now, and try to be sensible, while I—"

"Oh, I'll be sensible, all right, if that's what you want," he interrupted, starting toward her.

But she sprang back, agile as a kitten, and escaped him, and waved him off with a still more menacing finger, and a manufactured frown that was altogether bewitching.

"Now stand right where you are," she commanded, "while I ask you a question and tell you a great secret."

"Well, be quick about it then, if you expect me to stand way off here, you little tormenter."

"I shall take my time, sir," she said severely, and burst into so merry a laugh that the trained animal in front of her forgot his promise and made another dive for her, this time successfully.

"You are an angel," he declared, with more fervor than originality.

"I shall be if you break me in two with those brutal arms of yours, you great, terrible—darling. But now do behave, while I tell you something."

"Out with it."

"Well, you haven't smoked since you left New York yesterday morning."

"Bosh! that's no secret; I knew it before you did. But how did you find it out, you little Pinkerton?"

"If you knew how your beard used to smell you wouldn't need to ask. Uh!"—with a shrug and grimace—"how I used to hate it! I wonder that I ever learned to like you. But I did, though—anyway, a little," she added, with an arch twinkle of lips and eyebrows that no mortal could have resisted, least of all Brinton; so the dialogue was interrupted again.

"Now I shall not tell you the secret at all if you don't behave," she said with mock gravity when she was once more free to talk.

"But you've already told it."

"No, I haven't. I haven't even asked the question that goes before the secret. But I *will* do that. It's this: You haven't stopped smoking altogether, have you, Jack, dearest?"

The question was asked with such eagerness that Jack had to stop to laugh before he answered. Then the mood took him to banter the fair inquisitor, and to hold back his pleasant

revelation a little, to get finally the fuller effect of the surprise.

"Stopped smoking altogether!" he said finally. "Are you crazy? Why don't you ask if I have stopped eating? Why, you never asked me to stop."

"Of course I didn't, Jack. Do you suppose I would ask you to give up anything that gave you so much pleasure, just for a whim of mine? But I think I said something hateful once or twice about the pipes, and when I found you hadn't smoked today I was afraid you might have—I really was, Jack. And do you know, I wouldn't have had you do that for worlds."

She was perfectly serious now, and the dainty little face, its jollity gone, was positively Madonna-like, with the enticing sweetness and gravity of a Botticelli Virgin.

"You darling," Brinton murmured, too awe-struck with this phase of her beauty to move from his attitude of attention. "Wouldn't you, really?"

"No, really, Jack. Why, I should feel like a criminal if I had said anything to lead you to such a foolish sacrifice as that—like a downright criminal. I was so worried about it this afternoon when I found you hadn't smoked today. But it's all right; you shall smoke just whenever you please, you old darling; and you shall begin right now, for I know you're dying to, after all these hours."

"But I haven't any pipe or cigar with me," he faltered. "That is," he added hastily, "I haven't any in my pocket, and my satchel is over at the hotel." He felt that it was almost time to spring his surprise, but delayed it for the fullest effect.

"Of course I could go over and get a pipe, if you insist," he added, his eye twinkling.

"No, I couldn't spare you long enough for that," she said cooingly; "but fortunately it isn't necessary, for here is a pipe that you left last spring, and I got some tobacco for you for fear you wouldn't bring any."

She produced the articles in question from behind a clock on the mantel, and handed them to the astonished Brinton.

"No, wait a moment," she said, with seeming second thought, "and I will fill the pipe for you."

The sight of the dainty little Puritan filling a pipe—an old blackened pipe at that—was almost too much for Brinton's risibilities, even while the thought that the sweet thing was hiding her repugnance to the weed for his sake brought a lump to his throat.

He opened his lips to end the comedy by telling her the truth, confident of his reward; but some impish thought impelled him to prolong it a moment longer. So he took the pipe as she handed it to him, and held it in his hand, as if about to light it.

"Sweetheart," he said, "this is perfectly charming of you; but why should I smoke, when I know how you hate the smell of tobacco?"

"Oh, but Jack, I don't," she interrupted him; "truly I don't. I used to, it's true, but I don't any more. I—I—oh, Jack! that's the secret; I—oh, how can I tell you! Jack, I—I've learned to smoke!"

As she made the revelation she stood leaning toward him, with her hands clasped tightly in front of her, and her eyes peering up into his face with wistful eagerness, while the color came and went in her cheeks, and her every fiber quivered with excitement.

For his part, he stood like a piece of statuary, or, as he afterward phrased it, like a cigar store Indian, pipe in hand, positively dumb with astonishment. The first recognizable thought that came to him was that his little surprise was not working out just as expected. Then he became vaguely conscious that he was expected to say something.

"You have—learned—to smoke?" he finally managed to stammer.

"Yes, Jack; aren't you pleased?" she gasped eagerly.

"Pleased! Pleased! Why, of course I'm pleased; of course, of course," he managed to articulate with an attempt at gallantry.

"Oh, Jack, I'm afraid you're not; and I thought it would make you so happy. I had an awful time learning.

It was just terrible, and made me so sick I thought I should have to give it up; but I kept thinking how lovely it would be for us to smoke together, and that I just must get over feelings about tobacco before—before we were married. And finally I got so I could smoke without making me sick—cigarettes, I mean; I can't manage a pipe yet, but I shall learn. And now I like it; I do, really, Jack; I like it ever so much. Just see how well I can do it."

As she spoke she produced a cigarette from behind the clock, and striking a match, lighted the little tobacco roll with the facility of an adept, and, posing in front of Brinton, puffed at it daintily.

The emotions with which Brinton observed this performance—scarcely believing his eyes meanwhile—were too varied for record. But he had time to regain his composure, and he pulled himself together with an heroic effort.

"Bravo, bravo!" he cried. Then, "Give me a light, old pal," and if the words did not quite ring true the listener was herself too excited to notice it.

"Here you are, pard," she replied, with the intonation she imagined one man might use toward another, as she handed him the still burning match. Then, in her own voice, "Oh, Jack, dear, isn't this perfectly lovely!"

Brinton took two or three long whiffs at his pipe, and blew the smoke out in rings, partly to see if he had forgotten how and partly to steady his nerves and gain time. Then he stood holding the pipe in his hand, and looking down into the little Madonna face with the sweet lips puckered to this most unorthodox purpose, and with tobacco smoke wreathed about the head instead of a halo; and the horror he felt at seeing this ethereal creature thus occupied gradually gave way to the reflection that it was all done for his sake, even as he had renounced smoking for hers; and, following that thought, a sense of the humor of the little comedy of errors at last began to dawn on him. A smile that was not altogether forced

came to his lips, and stooping over he kissed the hair of the little figure.

"Little sweetheart, you are undoubtedly a trump," he said. Then for a time they stood looking at each other in silence, both smoking, and one of them at least supremely content.

"Do you really like this tobacco?" she inquired presently, between puffs; "honest and true, now, dearie, do you?"

He looked at her half quizzically, smiling indulgently.

"I think it is a little strong for you, my sweet," he said, "but I like it immensely."

"Honest and true?" she insisted.

"Honest and true, little sweetheart," he repeated. Then with belated inspiration he added: "Honest and true, I like it better than any tobacco I have tasted for half a year."

Thus a hideous lie was concealed beneath a verbal truth.

"Oh, I'm so glad," she beamed back at him. "I was so afraid my taste might be amateurish."

"Amateurish!" he repeated; "well, rather not. It's anything but that. You choose like a regular old-timer."

He seated himself on the sofa, and the little cigarette-smoker nestled by his side, looking up at him with seraphic satisfaction. They smoked for a time in the sweet companionship of silence.

"Hadn't you just a suspicion of what I meant when I spoke of the secret, Jack?" she queried presently.

"Most assuredly not," he replied, with the emphasis of supreme truth.

"I thought you might have," she said, "because once when I was just beginning to learn—let me see, it was just about six months ago—I gave a little hint in one of my letters. In fact, I gave a great big hint. I spoke of your horrid pipes, and asked how you would like to see *me* smoking. Don't you remember it, Jack, dear? I even said that I had a mind to learn. And when you said nothing about it, I began."

Jack, dear, did remember it very clearly. A broad grin spread over his face as he burst out: "Remember it? Well, I should rather say—" then he interrupted himself, and went on

hurriedly: "Why, of course I remember it; do I ever forget anything that you write? But I thought you were joking. I never for a minute dreamed that you meant it seriously."

She gave him a beam of pure contentment. "Oh, I hoped you wouldn't," she said roguishly. "I didn't like to do it without telling you, but I hoped

you might think it a joke, and so be really and truly surprised when you came."

"Well, you got your wish all right, little sweetheart," he assured her, with curious stress on the words. Then he laughed uproariously, and she joined him in merriest vim. But they were not laughing at the same joke.

A BALLADE OF HOME

By NATHAN M. LEVY

I HAVE seen all I want of the Nile,
 And the Alps do no longer delight;
 The Italians no longer beguile,
 And my interest in Spaniards is slight;
 He's the sorriest sort of a wight
 Who sings songs to the Rue de la Paix—
 All my thoughts to good Gotham take flight,
 I am going to stick to Broadway.

I am glad that I'm many a mile
 From the Greeks, for they weary me quite.
 Though I once liked the Hollander's style,
 Now no pæans to him I indite;
 As for people who cling day and night
 To the Strand, I have little to say,
 All their praise of the English is trite—
 I am going to stick to Broadway.

I have tarried in Turkey a while,
 But I think that the Turk is a fright;
 All the Russians I'm forced to revile,
 And their rulers I'm ready to smite;
 Some think Unter den Linden is bright
 With the charms and the beauties that sway,
 Let the poets all praise it with might,
 I am going to stick to Broadway.

ENVOI

Go, ye Baedekers, out of my sight,
 And your sign-posts to others display,
 As for me, all my friends I shall write
 I am going to stick to Broadway!

THE PROBLEM OF LIVING

By LILIAN BELL

WE had just come home from a year in Europe, where the Angel had been seeking local color for a new play. We didn't really go because we wanted local color. We went because Peach Orchard bored the life out of us after the new wore off. Country life is really more to be admired than enjoyed, especially by such as the Angel and myself, who are unhappy unless we can see the lights of Broadway by going on the roof.

We were, of course, stone broke. I hate people who come home from Europe with money. It shows that they don't know how to enjoy themselves.

But being impecunious did not worry us at first. We knew that all we had to do was to show the new play to any one of the eager managers, who ought to have been at the pier to meet us and so secure first chance at the "master-piece."

So we went to a hotel where we had sufficient credit not to be invited to pay a month's rent in advance, and the Angel jauntily submitted his play to the manager who had made a neat little fortune out of our first play and who almost lost the shoes off his feet on the second. He returned it after some delay, indicating the changes to be made. Indignantly the Angel took it to a second and then a third.

Finally, in the fourth week of our credit at the hotel the Angel decided to make the changes insisted upon by our first manager. But alas, this would take at least a month! In the meantime, where was the money to live on coming from?

We decided that we must go to

housekeeping. The tenants of Peach Orchard were hard up and paid their rent whenever they could. We tried them, but it was like tapping a vacuum. We couldn't turn them out, because they owed us too much money. Besides, we didn't want to stay in the country in the winter, anyway.

We looked everywhere for an apartment, but the Subway had raised rents appallingly. It was now the twenty-ninth day of our credit. I suggested borrowing money. The Angel shook his head.

"If we borrow from our personal friends we'll lose them. You can't stay friendly with people you have borrowed money from."

"It would be a nice, comfortable way to end certain friendships," I observed thoughtfully. "Now there's Elkinson. Borrow a hundred of him, and then we won't have to know him."

"But I thought you liked his wife," objected the Angel.

"That's so; I do. Men who are good for nothing but to borrow money from always have wives too nice to be sacrificed."

We ran over the list of our friends, and put prices on our estimate of them, but finally gave up the idea. There was always the fear that they might refuse, and then we should hate them so we'd have to give them up anyway.

"I heard today that there's a new artist studio building just finished that Munson and Stanforth and McElroy and several others have clubbed together and built. Suppose you go and see what's doing," said the Angel.

Now Munson and his wife, both artists, were jewels in our crown. They

were almost as useful to us for literary purposes as the Jimmies, so I rushed around to this building and found it to be the most blissful spot I had ever seen. The top studio was Munson's. Half of his furniture was moved in, and had been piled hither and yon with no care for the fine pieces and looking even more topsy-turvy than necessary.

But, alas for the Jardines, there was nothing to sublet! It had been a good year for artists and they were all disgustingly paid up, consequently haughty.

As I came down in the elevator, there stood Munson waiting to go up.

He was very tall and thin, and he wore a frock coat and a silk hat that ended somewhere among the rafters.

"Do I smell of moth balls?" he said without preface. We had not met for over a year.

I sniffed delicately.

"No more than most of us do at this season," I said, breaking it to him as gently as I could.

"I hope it isn't very bad," he began anxiously.

"Well, in the open air—"

"That's just it! It will be in a close room. We are going to lunch at the Waldorf with Frau Polisky of the Grand Opera—in her private suite. My wife is going to paint her. It's a fortunate thing that one of us can make money."

"What's the matter?"

"My pictures were skied and the mural paintings I did for McGinnis's library are all done, but he went to Egypt for the winter before they were completed and won't pay for them until he has seen them. Result, we are broke, stone broke, and shall be for three months."

"Munson," I observed feelingly, "there are but six square meals between us and the poorhouse."

"Is that so?" exclaimed Munson with interest. "Let's go up into the studio and organize ourselves into a ways and means committee."

"Now," he said, politely standing until I had seated myself upon a box of books, "how is it with you?"

When I had told him Munson smoked thoughtfully for a moment. Then he said:

"I see no way out of it but for you to sublet this apartment."

"It would be beautiful," I said, "but what would you do? And what are you going to do with all this furniture?"

"Our plans are all made. We shall stay where we are and come to town to paint. Eleanor has the studio next to this. As for the furniture, can't you use some of it? I thought you sold all your kitchen utensils and everything that was not worth storing?"

"We did."

"Well, use ours. It will save our having to store them or move them to the country where we don't need them."

"But—" I said.

He waved me to silence.

"Now, as I said, Eleanor has this next studio—"

"But you can't both use that—" I began.

"Wait. You and Aubrey take this apartment. I have held it at three thousand. I'll let you have it at twenty-four hundred dollars. Two hundred a month, payable in hundred dollar installments on the first and fifteenth of every month."

"Nice and easy," I said. "We'll take it."

"Good. Now then, as you are out every morning anyway, I'll sub-sublet this studio from you until two o'clock every day, for fifty dollars a month. That will let me work all I want to, and will give you a drawing-room every afternoon and evening and all day Sundays."

I began to laugh.

"Let's pay each other in advance," I said, gurgling. "I'll send you a cheque tonight."

"And I you," he answered.

A pause. Then he said:

"Excuse me for asking, but will your cheque be good?"

"Certainly not," I replied with spirit.

"Will yours?"

"Alas, I am afraid not."

"But it will be a nice way to exchange autographs," I said. "Girls general-

ly want Aubrey to add a sentiment whenever they ask for his. Shall he add a sentiment to your cheque?"

"It would do no harm."

"Then we can paste these cheques on our mirrors until they are negotiable. The mere possession of them will increase our assets."

"You are a business woman!" observed Munson with admiration.

"Now, there is but one thing more to do," he said presently, when we had both ruminated upon this pleasant solution of our difficulties, "and that is for one of us to borrow some money."

"It will have to be you, then," I said ruefully. "We have no securities that are not already punched full of pin-holes."

"I have never borrowed any money on my stock in this building," observed Munson thoughtfully.

"Then do it this minute," I cried rapturously.

"The only trouble is," he paused to roll a fresh cigarette, "that I have lost the certificate."

"Won't they give you another?"

"Yes, but it will take time, and then it would have to be marked 'duplicate' and the bank might hesitate to accept it. And all that would cause delay, whereas our necessities are immediate."

"Then find the first one. That's the answer to that!"

"I have looked everywhere. I think I shall consult a clairvoyant."

I shrieked with laughter.

"They do help one to find things," he said solemnly.

Then, seeing that I still continued to rock and roar, he said reproachfully:

"If she helps me to find it and I should lend you enough money to make your cheque good, would you stop laughing?"

My teeth came together with a snap which nearly made me owe the dentist also.

"What would you do for ten thousand dollars?" "I'd hate to tell you," I quoted gravely.

As the clairvoyant lived near, I promised to wait, and while Munson was gone I wandered over the apart-

ment and placed the furniture in my mind's eye.

He came back with a grin on his face.

"She told me everything—described me and Eleanor and said we were artists, that I had lost a valuable paper that I wanted to borrow money on, described my desk at home where I thought I had put it, the disorder of it, and said the thing was not lost. She told me where to look for it. But, she said, your fellow-artists will be much annoyed if you hypothecate your stock. Don't do it. You can get money in another way. There is a friend of yours, a slim, boyish-looking man who knows you own this stock, who will lend you money on your own note."

"That describes Aubrey!" I said in horror.

"Who will lend me money on my own note?" cried Munson.

"That's so, I forgot that part of the description," I said. "Well, who can it be?"

"Oh, I know who it is. He has offered to buy my stock."

"Then go to him this minute!" I cried.

"It's too late today. I'll go the first thing in the morning. Now I must go and get something to eat. I haven't had any lunch."

"It's three o'clock. I thought you were going to lunch at the Waldorf with your wife and Frau Polisky."

"I forgot all about it," he said simply.

"Well, Eleanor won't be surprised. When we are at work Eleanor and I often go without lunches altogether because it's too much trouble to go out."

Now, I, not being a genius, was shocked. My housewifely instinct was aroused.

"You might take your lunches with me," I suggested. "Then you would get them regularly."

"You are awfully kind, but when Eleanor has a sitter or I have a model, we couldn't spare the time to go."

"Then I'll send them in on trays and you can nibble as you work. Just salads and fruit and milk."

"The very, very thing!" cried Munson, with the first and only enthusiasm

I had ever seen in him. "That is the only thing necessary to complete my happiness."

"And," I continued, beaming, "when you want to stay in town for the night, I'll lend you those two big couches of mine that you can roll into Eleanor's studio."

Munson rose.

"It was Fate that sent you here to-day," he said, "and that made me forget to lunch at the Waldorf. I came down frightfully discouraged this morning, thinking that I'd have to let this apartment to a stranger, and it was like the thought of parting with a friend. Now, I have all the use of it I need and all the comforts of a home thrown in."

"I must go home and tell Aubrey to make out your cheque," I said.

He shook hands with me and rubbed his silk hat with his sleeve, thereby making it worse.

"If I get that money, tell the old man I'll lend him five hundred," said Munson.

We separated mutually pleased with each other.

When I told Aubrey he expanded into a silent grin.

"There were once two impecunious families," he observed, "who sought to support themselves by taking in each other's washing."

"That is a vulgar translation of an idyll in high finance," I said. "I feel as if I had simply solved the great problem of living."

FOOLS

By A. C. HALLAM

SURE there have always been fools in the world
 Since ever the world began,
 But the greatest fool is the fool who thinks
 That a woman's be-fooled by man.

The saddest fool is the fool who thinks
 Be-fooled he will never be—

The gladdest fool is the fool who thinks
 That never a fool is she—

The maddest fool is the fool who thinks
 She has never a fool but he—

Sure there have always been fools in the world
 But this is the truth in rhyme,
 That the wisest fool is the fool who thinks
 She is fooling him all the time.

LOVE is a poor mathematician. He can never figure out the cost.

ABOUT ARABELLA

By OWEN OLIVER

WHAT *Mrs. Pinch* said—
I am not one to speak ill of anybody, as you know, *but* . . . Yes, I mean Arabella. . . She has left us . . . for good, I am glad to say. . . I understand that she is to be married tomorrow. The man is twice her age, but she deliberately set her cap at him from the moment we were aboard the ship. He happened to be wealthy, and . . . Yes, it's her own affair, as you say. *My* conscience is clear, luckily. Nobody can charge *me* with advising anyone to marry for money.

You wouldn't have thought her mercenary? . . . I dare say not. You don't know her as I do. Two years we kept her and clothed her, and treated her like a fine lady—too much of a fine lady according to *my* ideas; but Mr. Pinch always said: "You can't send your friend's child into the kitchen, and if anyone is going to live with us she'll have to be treated like one of the family." It was his doing that we took her on the cruise in the Mediterranean. I should never have dreamed of such a thing myself; but he argued that he was making a bargain with the company for a round sum, and she wouldn't make much difference because she'd share the cabin with Mabel. Of course I didn't want the girls to have a tiresome child at their skirts all the time; and Arabella could manage her, which is more than anyone else can!

Of course I supposed that she would keep her place and not take advantage of being in the saloon to make out that she was one of the party; but she talked to everybody just like you or I would. Still I never dreamed that she was carrying on with that poor man whenever she was out of my sight. I

thought she would have enough to do to look after Mabel; but a woman named Gay took a fancy to the child, so my lady was free. However, I didn't know that then, and it came upon me like a thunderclap! When I gave her a piece of my mind the last morning, she was insolent—absolutely insolent! She said she'd never come inside my house again, and went off with his sister, who'd come to meet him; and she's to be married from there tomorrow. . . . Write and tell me? Not she! But Mr. Pinch talked a lot of twaddle about feeling responsible for a young girl, and went there to inquire about her. . . . You wonder that I allowed it? Well, my dear, between you and me, she seems to want to have Mabel for a time; and, of course, he's well-to-do, and if they chose to take a fancy to the child, I can't stand in her way; and really it will be a relief. She's very trying.

No, I never thought much of Arabella; but I should have imagined that she was the last girl in the world to run after a man for his money. It shows how easy it is to be deceived in people!

What Mr. Pinch said—

Yes, we've lost Arabella . . . I miss her a good deal. She was a kind little girl, and she did a lot of things for me; and for Mabel. She was always good to Mab. . . . Poor little Arabella!

What's become of her? She's going to be married. . . . The fellow's all right. He's well-off—very well-off—but he's turned forty, and she's only twenty-two. . . . No, you can't always go by age, as you say, but he is a grave, rather stern man; and she was so bright and lively. . . . I miss her

laughing and romping with Mab. . . . Well, he has money, you see, and he offered her a good home; and I'm afraid she wasn't too happy with us. You know what women are!

You see, Mrs. Pinch felt that Arabella was rather an expense to us. She was, naturally; but not so much as you would think. She was very handy about the house, and she managed Mabel. The child's a bit tiresome; but she's all right with anyone who understands her. She has a good heart; a very good heart, bless her! . . . She misses Arabella.

Arabella's father was an old school-fellow of mine. He lent me some money when I was hard pressed twenty-five years ago. I repaid it, of course, but—but you never repay an obligation, and—I was glad to have the girl, so far as I was concerned. . . . She was pleased to see me when I went over to his sister's. . . . I'd have liked her to be married from here. However, I've sent her a little present, and so has Mab; but you mustn't mention it. . . . Her address? Certainly. I'll write it now . . . she'll be pleased that you remember her. She was always so grateful for any little kindness. . . . Yes. We'll hope that she'll be happy; but I wish she could have stayed here till she met some nice young fellow, more of her own age . . . poor little Arabella!

What Miss Pinch said—

I never did like Arabella, and I don't, and I never shall; but I scorn to tell other people what I know about her. They soon find out for themselves what she is. . . . Sly and deceitful and underhanded and vain and forward and ungrateful.

They are by no means her only faults; but I always tried to make allowances for her. I put up with a great deal; but the thing I *couldn't* stand about her was her fine-lady-ism! She seemed to think that she was just as good as we were! You'll hardly credit it, but when we were on the trip—it was father's doing that we took her—she actually asked me to lend her one of my dresses for a dance on board. I ex-

plained to her that people wouldn't like it if they were practically forced to dance with anyone in her position; but even after that she had the impudence to dress up and go to the fancy dress ball! She pinned bills of fare all over her old muslin—the stewardesses put her up to it—and called herself "The Menu." You never saw such a ridiculous get-up! Why, the whole thing wasn't worth a pound. She'd had the muslin two seasons, and it was only one and eleven-three to begin with, and my dress—I was Mary, Queen of Scots—cost fifteen pounds! And they actually gave her the prize for the best costume! But they always do give it to those who make an exhibition of themselves, I understand! . . . Pretty! . . . Umph!

However, I forgive her and *hope* she'll be happy; but if a girl marries a man twice her age for his money, she has only herself to thank if she suffers for it. And she will, you mark my words!

What Mabel Pinch wrote—

DARLINGEST BELLA:

I sent you a mirror for your wedding present so you won't have to riggle about to see your back in the glass. I do hope you'll be happy and mother will let me stay with you when she's got over it. It's real silver and the lion's on the handle, and father helped me by it, and it's a sekrit, and mother doesn't no. She's awfully ratty!

I miss you dreadfully, becouse they won't read to me when I'm in bed, but father does sometimes, and cook.

Thank you for the sweets and the dieabollo (I don't think it's speled rite). I court it ten times on Tusedy, and it dropped on Rover and he houled. Don't tell Mr. Graham I'm so norty becouse he won't let me come if he nose, but you are yewst to it. I do wish you hadn't gone, darlingest Bella.

Last fortnite's repport was not very good. I had five inattention marks and twice late. They don't bussel me off like you did. We make the new techer mad. The cat has got kitens, and cook is keeping the tortusshell in

the woodshed for you. It muse and muse, and its tung is verry red. She and Ann send there love to dere Miss Mason—but you'll sune be Mrs. Graham. I have put kises at the botom. Write soon darlingest.

Your loving MAY.

P. S. I will be good when I come to your house. Be sure you tell him.

P. S. Tell him I'm a nice littel girl. I do want to come.

P. S. I was forth in Arithmettick and second in Frensh, and you mite tell him that to. Don't tell him that the repport said, "Speling caperble of mutch improofment." I want to come.

P. S. If you tell him I orfen said he was a good sort he's sure to let me come, and I could bring the kiten.

What Mrs. Gay said—

We had such a nice lot of men aboard . . . women? Ye-es. There were a good many; but they were a dull lot, except a dark-eyed little puss who was a dependent of some people named Pinch. They were terrible, except the father and a naughty little youngster of eleven. I rather liked the child. She reminded me of myself!

The wife was a great delight to me. She was manœuvering to catch our only rich man for one of her four grown-up daughters. The puss was manœuvering too! So I helped her by taking the child off her hands sometimes. Mrs. Pinch angled a little too long; and just when she believed he was going to bite—I didn't!—the puss hooked him! I was pleased.

I saw the hooking, as it happened. I was sitting out a dance; and she and the man took a seat close by. It was at the fancy dress ball. She had got up as "The Menu." Major Dalton and I were the judges and we gave her the prize because we thought the little thing hadn't had a fair show. The fellows chaffed her, of course, and when they wanted a dance they asked for something on the bill of fare. She was telling the man about it in her jolly, laughing way. "I've kept the roast beef and ices for you, if you want

them," she said; and he caught hold of her hand—so far as I could see in the dark—and said, "I want *you*!" I caught the words quite distinctly.

I'm not sure that I was really pleased either. It's a good match for her, and better than living with those dreadful people, but—well, I had the chance of marrying money, you know; but I married Jack!

What the Purser said—

I tell you, Peggy, these trips are nightmares! They expect dances and concerts and entertainments every night and the wretched purser has to provide them. . . . Well, he gets home to his little missus for a few days between. . . . Is she? Well, *he's* glad too! . . .

The people? Oh! Much the same sort as usual. There was one affair that amused me a good bit, though. There was a terrifying woman named Pinch, with four marriageable—and unmarried!—daughters, and a nice, quiet husband, and a most wicked imp of a small girl—jolly little kid. She had a sort of companion, nurse and general factotum; the prettiest girl aboard, except a gay little lady by the same name of Gay. A *good* little soul, and not a spice of harm in her—Mrs. Gay, I mean—if she did flirt a bit . . . suspicious Peggy! . . . Well, I didn't, old girl . . . where was I? . . . Oh! The Pinches. Yes, the old woman was trying to catch a rich fellow named Graham for one of her brood. Cinderella, as I called the girl, was trying to catch him for herself. Mrs. Gay played with the child to leave Cinderella free for the chase; and she landed him easily. Everyone saw how it would end, except the Pinch woman. Her rage was delightful, when she found out that Cinderella had fitted the slipper . . . why didn't *you* go in for a millionaire, Peggy, instead of a poor wretch of a purser? . . . Yes! You always were silly! . . . You dear little thing!

What the General said—

Trips don't mean places to me. They mean people . . . you're right.

They're a distressing study, our fellow-men. Our fellow-women are worse, I think—Mrs. Hambleton excepted. . . . I consider my wife a wonderful woman; and I don't care who knows it, sir!

One of our fellow-women disillusioned us on the trip. Frances was quite upset about it. We used to say that she was the sort of girl we'd have liked to have, if we'd ever had a daughter. Smiles for everybody! . . .

She was about one and twenty; an orphan and dependent on a family named Pinch. The women Pinches treated her disgracefully. Frances thought of offering to have her with us at the end of the voyage. I don't think she was ever so taken with anyone. . . . Well, the girl ended the voyage engaged to the richest man aboard; a fine man, I'll grant, but twenty years older. . . . I don't know what girls are coming to nowadays.

What Mr. Graham said—

Yes, I'm going to be married. . . . Yes. Caught at last! It's the sort of thing that might happen to any man, you know. . . . She's a good excuse. Here's her photo. . . . Yes, she's young.

Umph. . . . Oh! Put it frankly if you like. . . . I'll save you the trouble and put it frankly myself. She's barely two and twenty. She's unusually pretty. In age and temperament she is quite unsuitable, I presume you would say; but I suppose I know what I want. . . . She was dependent on a set of—the man and the little girl were all right; but his wife and elder daughters were simply horrible. The poor child was a sort of Cinderella. I wasn't exactly a prince; but I suppose she'd have married any decent fellow who came along to get away from them and have a home of her own. I own all that. I don't flatter myself that she fell in love with a solemn, middle-aged man like me; but I do believe that she likes me. *She's going to like me better!*

. . . I'll keep her young and smiling, please God. . . . She may be

going to marry me for my money; but she wouldn't marry me for my money if she didn't like me pretty well. Sometimes I even think it wasn't just for my money, but—but it's easy for a man to be a fool!

What Arabella said—

I don't think I shall call you Robert, now we are married. . . . Why, I am going to call you Bob! . . . Bob—I want to tell you something. You can look out of the window at—at cows and things—and not at me.

I always meant to say it when we were married, because—because I am not nearly so silly and thoughtless as you think I am. . . . I am quite serious, please, Bob.

You see, I notice things when you don't think I do; and I understand you a great deal better than you understand me. . . . I knew you'd laugh; but it's true. . . . I understand what you think when you look thoughtful sometimes, Bob. Shall I tell you? . . .

I know some things are best unsaid; but some are best said, and—Bob, you think that I married you for your money! . . . Well, not for that, exactly, but because I wasn't happy, and wanted a home. . . . I wasn't; and I did; but that wasn't why I married you. . . . No, no! Wait a minute. I want to tell you in my own way.

Do you remember when we came aboard? And May—my dear old May! She *must* come to stay with us—tared her hands with a rope? And you told me how to get it off with grease instead of soap? Well, I liked you directly; liked you so much that I told you about myself there and then, because I wanted you to like me; and I didn't want you to do it thinking that I was anything but what I was. So I explained that I was only a sort of companion; and you smiled and said, "I shall feel very lucky if you will be 'a sort of companion' to me on the voyage." . . . I wished that the voyage was going to last for years and years. . . . And now it is, and—and you will travel with someone who loves you, dear!

ON THE JERICHO ROAD

By JULIAN MALLINGER

AS I passed down the road to Jericho, my head was high,
Full was my pack—of self-conceit and vanity,
My cap was on my crown, my feather tipped in air,
I hummed a tune and thought that all was well.

But then there came upon me one with curly head,
Whose bow ('twas shaped like Chloe's lips) shot me with arrows
Keen as the glances from her eyes, which hurt me sore,
And one who mocked, one bright eye showing from a cowlèd face,
And there they left me by the road to moan and cry.

A Priest passed by upon the other side, but I'd no need of Priest,
With none to wed, nor humor to confess. A Levite also passed
(But I'd had levity before, more than enough),
But none there came to ease my wounds and put me on my horse.

At last came Father Time, that Good Samaritan, who picked me up,
Put oil into my wounds, gave food and drink and cheering words,
And set me on my way, with cap and feather picked from out the dust.

So now I'll on to Jericho, where in the mart I'll sell my goods,
I'll find the jade who threw me down, and then the Priest;
I'll flout them both, the Priest for loss of fee,
And Chloe for the dowry that she missed,
Oho! Oho! I'll on again to Jericho!

A ROMANCE

By J. CLARKSON MILLER

THEN they strolled—
Well, it really doesn't matter where they strolled;
And he told—
Well, it doesn't make much difference what he told;
And she said—
Well, it isn't worth while telling what she said.
Let it just suffice to say
That before another day
They were wed.

AS MAN TO MAN

By EDITH FULLERTON SCOTT

CATHERINE STONE had finished the work she had allotted to herself for the evening, and was about to close her desk when three rings at the door of her apartment startled her.

"Jimmie!" she thought, as she hastened to answer the bell. "This isn't his night. What can have brought him here on Thursday and at this hour?"

But whatever her inward curiosity, the man whom she welcomed detected nothing out of the ordinary in her manner. That was the beauty of Catherine Stone. She was always the same. If she had moods she kept them to herself, and none of her friends had to consider them.

Jimmie Moultrie flung himself down on the couch with an air of relief. His hostess stood regarding him with a tolerant expression. She thoroughly understood Jimmie, for they had been children together, and he thought he understood her. So they were chums, tried and true, and she knew that presently he would unburden himself to her.

Jimmie produced a long cigar, contemplated it in silence for a moment, and acknowledged with a short nod the matches which Catherine set at his elbow. When he had struck a light he drew a deep breath and conjured up a feeble grin.

"Sit down, Catherine, do! Make yourself perfectly at home, and, if necessary, prop open your eyelids, for I've got a lot to say and I'm going to say it now."

"Well, hurry up about it, Jimmie. You have only an hour, for the elevator stops running at eleven, as you know,

and you must not miss the last car down."

"All right! I'm primed and will fire away. Turn your chair sideways, please. I've made a fool of myself, and like a fool I want sympathy. But the telling will be easier if I am not under scrutiny."

"You might sit out in the hall and talk through the keyhole. That is my nearest substitute for a confessional box," she laughed, as she obediently placed herself in the position indicated.

Moultrie vigorously pounded the sofa pillows until he had adjusted them to fit into the angles, and then, settling himself on them, began:

"Catherine, you and I have always been pals, and I hated like the deuce to have to leave you out of a dinner that I gave last night."

"A dinner? Why, I didn't know you had one in mind. Was it a stag?"

"Yes. It was a farewell affair—my last bachelor dinner, you know."

"Oh!"—Catherine was surprised into the exclamation. It is difficult to be calm when a knife has been suddenly thrust into your heart. But Jimmie was too absorbed in his own thoughts to note the intensity of the monosyllable, and conventionality, like an anesthetic, deadened the blow, so she instantly added, "Who's the lucky girl? Do I know her?"

"Yes, but she's not your kind. You make a business of literature, Catherine, and your clever articles are a reflection of your eminently sensible mind. She, too, courts the muse, but she writes airy nothings that you turn up your very superior nose at. I refer to Ethel Cameron."

The knife sank in to the haft and was slowly twisted.

Ethel Cameron! Catherine recalled her as she had looked at a recent reception at the Pen and Brush Club. She mentally contrasted the girl's delicate grace of face and form with her own tailormade lines. Catherine had many staunch and admiring men friends, who respected her ability and judgment and could count on her discretion, and they never guessed that she would gladly and without reservation exchange all her desirable attributes for a doll-baby face and the love which it seemed to inspire. They would have considered it incongruous if she had so much as attempted to spell her name with a "K," as she had once longed to do, and she knew better than to try even to modernize the arrangement of her hair by the addition of the fashionable puffs which so adorned Miss Cameron's daintily poised head.

"No, she is not my kind, Jimmie, but I have enough imagination to see how she might be yours," she commented honestly.

Jimmie laid down his half-smoked cigar and took out his pipe.

"Good! I knew you'd understand. Now I can talk as man to man."

Catherine winced. There it was again! As man to man! Why was she to bear the inconvenience of petticoats and yet in other respects be treated by the lords of creation as one of themselves, when all she wanted, if they could but know it, was to be pampered and petted?

Jimmie was meditatively polishing his meerschaum and was apparently oblivious to her presence. She had to grip the arms of her chair and clench her teeth lest by some ill-chosen speech she should betray her desire to attract his attention to herself. She could not bear to be ignored, but she must not weary him. She could not afford to lose his friendship. She would not give him up altogether, even though she had to adopt Ethel Cameron.

"You see, it was this way," Moultrie

resumed. "A long time ago—four years, to be exact—I commenced to receive valuable gifts from an absolutely unknown source. On Christmas, on New Year's, and on my birthday, these took the shape of various articles of silver for my bureau and desk. And besides, every two weeks a book comes to me by mail. It always is sure to be just the book that I would myself choose, but who the donor is I have never been able to find out."

"Why, Jimmie! How very interesting and mysterious! Why have you never told me about this before?"

"For two reasons. First, because for a while I was rather inclined to suspect you as being the sender—simply because you know so well my taste that I could think of no one else so fitted to cater to my love for reading."

"Me? Jimmie! How ridiculous!"

"That's what I decided. I watched you pretty narrowly and you never let drop a hint, and so I could not in cold blood accuse you of acting so romantically."

"Romantically?"

"Yes. Oh, you sensible young woman, can't you conceive that it is romantic for a man to be the object of somebody's constant thought? At the beginning I was annoyed at the anonymity, but when I became reconciled to that, life took on a new zest. Every alternate Saturday I hurry to my office, and I would be really upset if there were no book for me in the morning's mail. Each time I hope to find a clue to the giver's identity, but the packages are always wrapped in plain brown paper and the address is typewritten on a label and pasted on."

He paused; but Catherine was eager for him to finish and go, before she should reveal to him her mortal hurt, which it took all her self-control to hide, so she urged him on.

"You said there were two reasons for your keeping this a secret from me. You mentioned but one. What was the other?"

"I was afraid—afraid that you would laugh at me."

"Laugh at you?"

It was inane of her to echo his words, but she could not be original.

"Even so. For I should have had to confess to you that I was falling in love with an abstraction. Such devotion captivated me. I firmly made up my mind that when I discovered the girl—I knew it was a girl, and one with a deep vein of sentiment, for no one else would be capable of showing such long continued attention without reciprocation—that I would ask her to be my wife. You would have discouraged this determination, and I did not wish to be discouraged. And so, whenever I was with one whom I knew, however slightly, I would mentally put the question: 'Is it you? Is it you?' But four years is a long time—some whom I thought guilty have married or are engaged. By the process of elimination, my unattached girl friends of so long standing have narrowed down to you and to Ethel; and you I had already acquitted."

Catherine's throat was dry, but she managed to say:

"And so you decided to propose to her?"

"Yes. Therefore, last night I gave my bachelor dinner. It was a quiet function. Jack Hunter was the only guest. We talked over all our old love affairs, and I told him of my new one—my final one. But because it has been of such slow and romantic growth, I did not mention Ethel's name to him. Besides, I knew a girl of such delicacy would rather I wouldn't until I had spoken to her."

"Then you had not previously asked her?"

"No! I waited until tonight."

"Tonight?"

"I have just come from her to you."

A cruel stab, and Catherine writhed under it. It seemed impossible that it was her voice that she heard say in even tones:

"Ah! Then I am the first to be allowed to congratulate you?"

Jimmie leaned forward and looked into her eyes. She came to herself and met his gaze bravely.

"Always pals, whatever comes?" he asked.

And she answered with her old courage.

"Still old pals."

"Your hand on it!"

And as man to man she gave him her hand. He held it for a moment in the firm grasp of reverent friendship; but then there came a subtle change in the pressure and he bent over her and drew her to him.

"Cassie! dear Cassie!"—the sweet, familiar name that he had not used since she left off wearing short skirts—"I went to Miss Cameron and I told her the story that I have just told you. I asked her point blank if it were she that I had to thank for the gifts. She—she laughed at me! She was indignant that I should think her such a fool. And so I did not propose to her. I was spared that mistake. Cassie, I have been a blind and stupid bat. I have come from her to you. I shall never go from you to anyone else."

A wandering gust of wind blew in through the window, played unnoticed among the papers on the desk, and sportively tossed into the scrap basket a label on which was typewritten the name of Mr. James Moultrie.

LET HIM OUT

MISS GUSHINGTON (*entering street car*)—Oh, don't get up. Please keep your seat—please do!

MR. MANHATTAN—Really, I'd like to oblige you, madam, but I want to get out at this corner.

CHANSON FROM THE LATIN QUARTER

By CHARLTON LAWRENCE EDHOLM

AN attic up four flights of stairs,
With couch, an easel, luckless chairs,
My loaf and bottle with me shares
A mistress; this is she:

A fragile form in shabby dress,
A rogue's dark eye; in each caress
A mingled sweet and bitterness;
Her kiss but irony!

Eh, bien! I like the bite and tang
Of careless kisses; like the slang
Of her crisp love words; with a pang
Our parting I foresee.

She gave me life, she gave me friends;
Her lovers, they, like me!—she lends
Us inspiration, all; she blends
Our toil with gaiety.

Ah! some, I know, she's made her slaves,
A few to false and cringing knaves;
Her kiss drove some to nameless graves;
Their love was tragedy.

But I, I love her as a wench
To spice my fare on wine-house bench
With Attic salt and cayenne French;
Thus she and I agree.

My attic, up a hundred stairs,
With books and bottles piled on chairs
And pipes and sketches, with me shares,
My mistress, Poverty.

A REAL widow may not be as wise as a grass widow, but she knows where
her husband is when it comes night

CUPID AT THE CLEANER'S

By DELLA CAMPBELL MACLEOD

BILLY RUTLEDGE left the six-day bicycle race at Madison Square Garden at three o'clock in the morning. His eyes were heavy and bloodshot. His head was going round and round. He had watched the riders bent over their wheels, hour after hour, making the ring like automatons, with only an occasional "spill" to break the monotony of the dizzy circling. It was in the confusion of one of these that Billy staggered through the sea of perspiring, beer-drinking humanity, blinded with tobacco smoke and dust, and made his way to the street.

Once out in the clean, cold December morning he swung his broad shoulders back and started at a brisk pace for his rooms downtown. New York at three in the morning does not offer sights attractive enough to induce a sleepy man to linger, and Billy Rutledge was drowsy with the healthy weariness of his twenty-six years. He waved back solicitous cabbies and struck out by Fourth Avenue for Gramercy Park.

What was it that induced this same Billy Rutledge, tired as he was, to walk home? Possibly the same influence that led him past innumerable lighted windows without so much as a glance into them, and finally drew him up sharply before the dimly illuminated window of a cleaner's shop at his own corner.

Indeed, he was scarcely conscious of having halted, hands in pockets, until he heard himself repeating emphatically—"I'm sick of it—sick of it all!" What "it all" meant, only the young man soliloquizing could have told. The window was poorly lighted by a fly-specked electric-light bulb and the re-

flection from an arc-light further down the street. The sickly glow from the two threw fantastic figures on a gown, cleaned and ready to be sent home, hanging with sleeves outspread on a support from a hook in the center. It was this gown that held the eyes of the young man. It was built of pale blue satin and lace. The skirt broke into ripply ruffles of foamy lace about the foot. The neck, cut low, repeated the effect. The sleeves were elbow length. A little blue satin girdle with five jeweled bows on it was carefully pinned in place.

"By Jove!" he rubbed his eyes and leaned nearer, "seeing a frock like that makes a fellow feel so much the more ashamed of himself. I'm—sick—of—it—all!" He nodded toward the still brilliant lights of Broadway. A clock in a neighboring church struck four, and he was still gazing meditatively at the blue gown. He turned away his head and put his hand up to his mouth, yawning. "What's keeping me?—You're keeping me!" He pointed an accusing forefinger at the suspended garment. "I wonder," he mused aloud, tearing himself suddenly away, "what kind of a girl would have worn a dress like this!" He turned and retraced his steps. "It's a peach of a gown," he said under his breath. "If I knew the girl that this dress belongs to, I'd spend the rest of my life trying to persuade her to let me pay for having her clothes cleaned."

Once away from the window, the vision did not depart. In front of him, down the street, the gown moved. Above its heavenly tints, blurred by the vague light into a tissue of moon-

light and embodied music, he caught a fleeting glimpse of bronze hair piled high and the faintest glimmer of a seashell ear. He brushed his eyes incredulously. "Confound it," he muttered, "when a man runs afiel of something he can't grip, he is in a devil of a fix." In his rooms, he started to make himself a cocktail, when a slim arm sheathed in lace and blue ribbons seemed to catch the glass away. "I'll be—" he began, starting back. "I'm rip roaring drunk already," he apologetically explained to his reflection in the mirror. "Blue dresses on the brain are a billion times worse than bats!" With which reflection he tumbled into bed and fell asleep.

"Hanged if I didn't dream about it!" The same young man addressed his reflection in the mirror the next morning at half-past eleven, as he was making his toilet for the day. What it was he had dreamed he vainly tried to remember. The dream was gone. The whole thing, everything connected with the gown, was nebulous—as far away as a summer cloud, as elusive as the gray blue mists of twilight.

"William Rutledge," he admonished seriously, "don't make a bigger fool of yourself than nature and circumstances have already fashioned you! Forget the cerulean garment!"

His intention was to give the cleaning shop of Louise a wide berth, but his feet led him straight in that direction.

The dress still hung in the window. Billy Rutledge drew up before it with a grave salute, lifting his hat. Viewed in the sunlight it was ten times prettier than in the smoky gas-flare of the previous night. It was as clean and fresh as the morning itself. "Somehow, these evening gowns," he remarked inwardly, "always look so draggle-tailed by daylight." This one, however, had no train, though it was long enough to indicate that the girl who wore it was not short. "I'm glad of that," he continued approvingly, glancing at his own six-foot-three reflection in the glass. Standing there, gazing like an infatuated freshman at his first

music-hall love, the fly-specked window was transformed into a crystal ball, and the man before it was seeing as many impossible things as the "White Queen" before breakfast.

He conjured up the girl who would wear a dress like that—a dress made up of daisy-patterned lace and soft blue ribbon. He knew she had eyes blue as violets, though Billy, personally, had a preference for brown-eyed maidens. Her hair grew down in a point on her forehead, and was looped up behind in a torrent of curls. Sometimes, when she wore this gown, she stuck a little blue ribbon bow in it to bring out the bronze-gold lights. She had skin like cream, with cheeks that wild roses had been crushed to stain a faint pink. He could see her pinker ears, how they lay close to her head, and her slim little rounded white throat. The vision faded as he strained his eyes to look at her hands. He could not see, but he hoped they were long and slender and faintly pink.

Lingering over his breakfast, William Rutledge looked himself squarely in the face. He opened up the prosecution by charging the plaintiff with growing to be a degenerate cur. "You're getting used to this lapdog life." He buttered a roll. "Six months ago, when you were getting up at four o'clock in the morning—instead of going to bed at that hour—to go to the mine that has brought you this"—his eyes swept the luxuriously appointed club dining-room—"you couldn't have kept the lids of your eyes closed after five. Now you are sleeping until ten and eleven. Then you ate hardtack and corned beef, and your muscles were hard as nails; now you've grown an appetite for sweetbreads and omelettes—and you're soft as breakfast food sopped in cream." Behind the morning paper his chin was in his palm. He was thinking.

After graduating at college he had left the ancestral plantation in the South to try his fortunes in the West. A gold mine that had been bought by his visionary father was the lure that led him to Colorado. Billy had taken

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this as his part of the family inheritance, and left the plantation to his elder married brother. The mine, which had been the family jest for years, had more than justified his belief in it. He had worked hard, but the end had been a story-book reward. The vein was rediscovered, and he was rich.

He had been in charge of the New York office six months when this story opens. His family, his college associations, his money, had opened to him every desirable door in the social and business world. But now he confessed to himself that the dinners bored him, the women were tiresome, the girls merely talking dolls. He had outgrown his senior softness for petticoats. He was distinctly disappointed to find it so. He had been looking forward to falling in love again with every pretty face he met, as in the old days. But he found himself strangely indifferent. "I'm tired of it all," he summed up. "My lungs have developed a taste for fresh air and fresh-air people that New York can never satisfy. I'm going back to the mine—and that pretty soon!"

He went to dinner in the evening with a San Francisco man, and afterward to a theater. The play in question was the telepathic success of Broadway.

His attention was arrested from the time the curtain went up. He had always been interested in telepathy. His library out West in the little bungalow at the mine consisted of a queer collection of books dealing with this subject. He had demonstrated his own power to send and receive messages too often to question it. His companion of the evening found him unresponsive. The play gripped him. When the curtain fell on the last act he made some excuse for not going to supper, and strolled off alone. His mind was made up. He was going West; the East had nothing to give him. He could feel the blasé lines forming about his mouth; he knew the hideous puffs were slowly crawling up under his eyes.

He hurried almost feverishly toward

his rooms—stopping just an instant before the window of the cleaner's shop, where the blue gown shimmered like the moonlight on the waters of Puget Sound.

He knew there was no use going to bed—he couldn't sleep. Accordingly, he filled the pipe that had been a companion to his dreams—the pipe that had cheered him through the chill dawn of those hard-working days when he looked for rainbow gold. He settled down in an easy-chair and stretched his long legs to the blaze. He closed his eyes. And with the first puff he felt the presence of Her.

She was close to him, not three feet away, the girl in the blue gown. Her eyes were downcast, and he studied her long bronze lashes. "In a story," he mused aloud, "they'd be black, but they are exactly the color of her hair."

The firelight threw a rosy glow on her face. She seemed to draw back before his scrutiny. "Really," he apologized, "I couldn't stand it, darling, if there were any paint on your face—There isn't!" She made a *moue* at him and danced behind his chair. He caught her hands and drew them around his neck.

"I'm going to kiss you," he announced. "I always kiss Marjorie, my little niece, when she puts her arms round my neck this way—You're about Marjorie's age, no matter how many candles you are entitled to on your birthday cake. Come on!"

She was struggling to free her hands. "Come, kiss your Uncle Billy," he wheedled. The girl suddenly ceased trying to free her hands. Her tactics changed. Tighter and tighter she drew her arms about his neck until he was fairly struggling for breath. "Girl!" he called sharply. Then, as a sudden after-thought, "I don't even know your name—tell me!"

She was gone. He opened his eyes and pinched himself to see if he had been dreaming. The girl had disappeared, even as a smoke-ring fades, but his throbbing neck bore evidence that it had not been altogether a dream.

"Come back," he called. "Girl—I won't kiss you!" But she had gone for good.

At seven the following morning he was dressed and starting for a walk before breakfast. "Good morning," he saluted the blue gown gravely. It hung, unintelligent—even unrepentant. "You've forgotten last night," he taunted. But there was no working the crystal ball this time.

He went again to see the telepathic play. The thing had become an obsession with him. A sudden idea came to him as the curtain went down on the third act. He would trace the girl to whom the blue gown belonged through the cleaner. He would find her. He would marry her. He had never failed yet in anything he had started out to do. If it took the rest of his life and all his money he would marry that girl.

The cleaner's shop was closed—the bell broken—the blue gown gone. He knocked in vain. No answer came to his summons. He philosophically told himself that it was exactly what he might have expected. The dress had been sent home. He would come betimes in the morning and get the name and address of the girl of the blue gown. Then, for the girl herself!

Thus do the gods delight in checkmating the plans of mortals! On reaching his rooms he found a telegram from his brother in the South, calling him to the plantation in Alabama without delay. "Of greatest importance," the message read. He decided to go the next afternoon, after securing the clue from the cleaner. He could think of no business urgent enough to require his immediate setting forth for Alabama.

He reached for his pipe, scarcely daring to hope that the Girl would come. She did, with the first puff. She was across the hearth from him. When he started toward her she disappeared. He implored her to tell him her name. She inscrutably regarded glowing castles in the fire. "I am going to get your address from that cleaner," he settled down after another futile effort to catch her; "then I will find you,

à la Sherlock Holmes, and marry you."

For the first time she seemed about to speak. No, she was going to sing. She stretched her slim foot to the blaze. Her beauty would have galvanized a dead man to life, as she sang the foolish old song of the girl in "Mother Goose":

"The little maid replied—
(Some say, a little sighed)
'But what shall we have for to eat—eat—eat?
Will the love you're so rich in
Make a fire in the kitchen,
Or the little god of love turn the spit—
spit—spit?'"

She buried her face in her hands, convulsed with merriment over her own performance.

"You've got a voice like red roses," he sank back helplessly as she disappeared for the third time. "Sing me something else."

"Will the love you're so rich in," she mocked, "'make a fire in the kitchen?'"

"I should say!" he bragged. "Don't you know I'm rich as cream? I've got a gold mine out West, just for you and me to dig money out of. What do you know about a kitchen? Can you cook?"

She held up two hands like flowers. "I'd like to see a biscuit you made," he teased. His remarks were interrupted by a messenger boy. It was another telegram from his brother, asking him to come at once: he was ill and Billy must act for him in a business deal.

The Girl had disappeared. No amount of persuasion could bring her back. A faint fragrance lingered. It was like plum blossoms after a spring rain.

Billy Rutledge spent a restless night. His train left at six-thirty, and the cleaner's shop was not open when he stopped there. He waited until he had barely time to make the ferry, then sprinted toward Broadway after a cab.

When William Rutledge changed at Washington, the sole occupant of the sleeper rushing southward, beside himself, was a girl. The fact that she

was a girl did not interest him. He was deeply engrossed in thoughts of the dream girl he had left behind him. So much so that the several calls for luncheon passed unheeded. A solicitous porter finally importuned him to have something to eat. Billy Rutledge, after he got in the dining car, made a very good meal indeed. Returning, he almost ran into the young woman in the sleeper. He started back in embarrassment. Their eyes met. He quickly put it down to a disordered imagination, but—the fleeting glimpse he had of her face, as he bowed low begging her pardon, sufficed to convince him of what he dismissed as absurd a moment later—that here was the lady of his dreams. He even fancied that he caught in the tail of her eye a lurking gleam of recognition. He passed on to his section, and went back to his thoughts, which took this line:

"See here, old chap, you're in love; and a fellow in love sees in every woman he meets his sweetheart's likeness, just as a drunken man thinks the whole world is intoxicated. This affair happened along just when you were in the mood for loving, as the yellow journals say. Now, you are spiritually bound to that blue-gown girl in New York, and it is to her that your thoughts belong. Don't look at the girl yonder any more!" He didn't—until late in the afternoon. He watched her coming down the aisle. She wore a gray gown and black furs. Her ears were pink; her eyelashes long and bronzed-tinted. He forced his eyes away from her, and plunged back into his dime magazine and cursed his brother for calling him South.

At breakfast the following morning she sat at a table across the way. She was slim, and in the white shirt-waist she wore was even more girlish and charming than the day before. Her hair shone in the morning sunlight, and she lingered over her grapefruit, while she propped the morning paper up against the sugar-bowl and devoured the headlines. He wondered what her name was. At luncheon he threw a sop to his sentimental conscience by

explaining that he only waited until she went into the dining car, because he did not happen to get hungry himself until that moment.

He had no explanation or apology for his ridiculous annoyance when he observed, in passing her section, that she had two immense boxes of candy and several dozen American Beauties with stems a yard long. He resolved in sudden self-disgust that he would move into another car. The remainder of the trip he spent moodily in the smoker. Just before his station was called, down in Alabama, he dozed off in an afternoon nap. He dreamed that his sweetheart told him her name—the porter's hand on his shoulder wakened him—he couldn't remember, but he had a vague impression that it began with a C.

The little station was just as he remembered it. There was the same station agent. And there, waiting for him, was Pomp, the white-haired old carriage driver, who had been in the family ever since he could remember. Pomp bowed with prodigious pride at his elbow, as he alighted. "Sarvent, Marse Billy," his rich old voice welcomed. "Heah I is wid de kerridge ter meet you, suh!" Various old friends of the neighborhood added their greetings. The station agent wanted to know if it was snowing up North when he left.

"Aixcuse me," the old negro began to scratch his head and look around, "Miss Clothilde, she tole me whut I clean furgot in my pride o' seein' you, suh,—and dat wuz dat Miss Sissy gwine to be on dis train, too— Yonder she is now," hurrying off in the direction of the station. Billy Rutledge's eyes fairly bulged from his head. There, standing by her box of roses and a small mountain of bags, was the girl from whom he had fled on the train. He ground his teeth savagely at the thought of the complications that lay before him. For the first time he realized that he was made from dust, and that any wind from a woman's petticoat could blow him whithersoever it chose.

"Dis heah's Marse Billy Rutledge"—

Pomp performed the introduction with pride—"and dis heah's Miss Sissy C'ruthers. She gwine to ouah house on er visit." The girl laughed deliciously and held out a gray-gloved hand. Billy gripped it mechanically, with rage in his heart. She had not only stolen his sweetheart's eyes and hair—she even had her voice!

It was very pleasant to be at home again, Billy told himself, as he dressed for the Southern supper. He would make the best of whatever it was that brought him. And he would show this Miss Sissy, whoever she was, that he was made of sterner stuff than her previous admirers had probably given her cause to consider the young men of her acquaintance. He would show her! As he brushed his hair vigorously at the old-fashioned bureau, right over his shoulder—he whirled, and the reflection vanished—it was the tantalizing face of the girl in the blue gown. It was line for line, curve for curve, the face of this "Sissy" downstairs; except that the latter did not wear her hair in the adorable puffs and curls of his sweetheart. If he only might have had that little knot of blue that she wore in her curls as a gage! He knew she was close by him. He could drink in the perfume from her hair. "I swear," he whispered, "that you are the only girl in the world for me!" His love-making was interrupted by Pomp's formal announcement of supper.

"Look here, Bob," Billy finally burst forth about nine o'clock, when the two brothers were left alone together, "what's all this mystery, anyway? You've got me here; and I can't for the life of me make out what it's all about. Buck up! Let's talk business. I left an important affair in New York, something that concerns my whole future, to come to your rescue. Out with it! What is the business deal in which I am to act for you?"

Bob hesitated a moment.

"To make a clean breast of the whole thing," he said—"but I swore not to—Clothilde sent those telegrams. We all wanted you to come home. There

isn't any business trouble. Made more money this year than usual. Clothilde wanted you—a little scheme of hers. She wired before she told me—then I weakly agreed to her scheme."

"Cut that short," the other said with brusque tenderness. "You and Clothilde know I'm yours to command. Everything I've got—and I'm getting disgustingly rich out of that worked-out mine—is at your disposal. If it's money—"

"But it isn't," the other hastily interposed. "Hang it all, can't you see? She's got a matrimonial scheme hatched up, and you're to be the bridegroom. She's got the whole thing planned out, even to the gown she's going to wear as matron of honor. You and Sissy are to marry. We want you to have an old-time wedding—festivities for a week, get you settled down, you know."

"But I tell you," Billy replied, when he had recovered his breath from this announcement, "I am already engaged. Didn't you know that?"—at his brother's look of surprise. "Funny I forgot to mention it. Never mind her name, or anything about her. Hang it," rising impatiently, as the other looked injured at this want of brotherly confidence, "it's all right, I tell you, except—er—I don't want to talk about it yet, even to you, old man." Billy strode up and down the room. "I'll speak to Clothilde myself and tell her how impossible her plans are."

Bob laughed long and loud. "No you won't! That's just the point—you mustn't," he explained. "I've sworn that I wouldn't tell you. Anyway, it was bound to be a fizzle, that plan was. Man alive, who do you think you are, and what—that Sissy Caruthers would have you? She's got more men in love with her right now than six ordinary girls could handle. She's a flirt from the sole of her foot to the crown of her head. She wouldn't—look—at—you," with a gale of laughter.

"She'd better wait until I give her a chance," Billy replied savagely. He relapsed into gloomy silence.

Bob crossed over and held out his

hand. "Forgive me, old chap," he said. "It's all right if I'm not to be let into the affair yet awhile. But—you won't misunderstand, eh, if I ask you just one question? She, this girl you're engaged to, isn't an—er—actress is she? You know, we old-timers haven't come to the point where we can, with a good grace, stand for actresses in Alabama."

It was Billy's turn to roar.

"All women are actresses," he replied with worldly wisdom. "But the girl I am going to marry isn't on the stage—" He stopped short. How did he know? If fate had placed her behind the footlights, the artificial life had at any rate not robbed her of the dewdrop charm of innocence. "Why, she never even went to a matinee by herself," he heard himself say. "You'll adore her, old man," he straightened up proudly. "Why, she's made a man out of me, already—and I haven't even seen her!"

"Haven't seen her?" the other's chin dropped incredulously.

"Er—that is—" the engaged man floundered. "I haven't seen her since your telegram came calling me here. Didn't even see her to say good-bye."

"But you wired her, of course," the thoughtful married man said. "Keep your own counsel, my boy; but I'm mighty glad she's that kind of girl. Of course you know about her people. I've always been a believer in our old Southern theory that blood will tell. A girl with a pedigree is a safe risk. Don't, for God's sake, though, give Clothilde an inkling that I've let you in on the matrimonial cake she has been mixing for you."

"I'll listen to her dissertations on matrimony," Billy agreed, refilling his pipe, "and break to her gradually that I am not on the market. Tell me about this young person, though—this fascinating Sissy Caruthers."

"Be glad you are engaged," the other felicitated. "We are all devoted to her. But I tell you, the man who tries to domesticate Sissy Caruthers has my sympathy. You see, she has done as she sweetly damn please so long. . . .

You let her alone! That's my advice to any man."

Billy might have profited by this excellent advice in the days that followed if he had perceived any danger. As it was, Miss Caruthers treated him with frank friendliness, but she showed a distinct preference for the society of young Bob, who trailed devotedly after her on her walks and drives. If Billy was put out at this, he gave no outward indication to that effect.

One rainy day he found Sissy curled up on the sofa in the library reading Tennyson. She apologetically held up a very damp handkerchief, and moved over into the corner to hide her pink eyelids.

"It's the 'Lily Maid of Astolat,'" she explained, putting the Tennyson aside. "I have never altogether recovered from her death. I weep every time I read it."

The rain outside was coming down in broadsides against the long French windows. The fire on the hearth burned brightly and threw dancing shadows on the book-lined walls—books collected by generations of Rutledges. Sissy crossed over to the spinet that had belonged to Billy's great-grandmother. She ran her fingers over the yellowed keys, and began to play half-forgotten fragments of old melodies. The man watched her, and his heart softened dangerously. He had forgotten his brother's well-meant counsel. He was hoping that his sweetheart would wear white in the mornings—one of those crisp shirt-waists, with high collars and frilly lace bows under the chin. This girl had the same exquisite curve of throat that his dream girl had; her ears were as pink and shell-like as those of the girl he loved. He dared not look at her hands. He refused to glance at her foot. He moved to the window, telling himself that all pretty girls looked alike. He even went so far as to try to convince himself that the wet plum-blossom fragrance that lingered about the girl at the spinet, even as it clung to his sweetheart—this faint, elusive per-

fume that was like elfin music heard in a dream—was maybe, after all, only some fashionable perfume of the moment, and that girls in general were using it.

"What are you thinking about?" Sissy called over her shoulder. There was no reply. The man was gloomily gazing at the rain outside.

"Then the little maid replied—
(Some say, a little sighed)
'Will the love you're so rich in
Make a fire in the kitchen—'"

He strode toward her. His face was pale, his eyes intense. He caught her hand. "Tell me," he demanded, "how did you happen to play this song?" He held her hand in a tight grip.

"Why, what do you mean?" she asked, bewildered, and coloring furiously, as she jerked her hand away. "Mr. Rutledge, what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing," he replied half under his breath, "except that I am the damndest fool in the universe. I—I—" He seemed to have forgotten her presence. He was back at the window. Sissy cast a frightened glance in his direction. She hesitated, called him softly, but he did not answer. She tiptoed quietly from the room.

After that day in the library Billy avoided Sissy. He had never been attracted toward her, he told himself, save for the slight resemblance she bore to his dream girl sweetheart. His sweetheart! That little girl in blue! He never saw her any more in his dreams. When he thought of her by day—he ground his teeth savagely at the accusing truth that stared him in the face—she was curiously confused with Sissy. There was but one thing for him to do—go back to New York as quickly as he could get there. He ascertained that the next northbound train passed through early in the morning. He resolved to leave on it for New York.

Returning from the station, he found Sissy and Bob about to start on a partridge hunt. He was invited to go along. Sissy looked very small and childish on Bob's big hunter. In the

race across the soft grass-carpeted fields, Billy told her he was leaving for New York in the morning.

"Let Bob kill the birds," she begged. "Let's have a gallop down that old road."

From the brow of the hill on which they came to a stop a panorama of rolling fields spread out before them. Below, half-hidden in the bushes, a picturesque cabin nestled. From the mud-daubed chimney a faint line of blue smoke rose. Billy's eye was arrested. "Don't you want to have your fortune told?" he asked suddenly. "Yonder is where Mam' Judy, the plantation oracle, lives. She is the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, and several hundred years old at least. Let's go to see her."

"Let's!" Sissy assented gleefully. "I have never had my fortune told."

Mam' Judy's cabin might have been arranged by a stage director for the abode of a "conjurer." Its dark recesses were lighted by the glow of a dying fire. The solitary window was curtained by a thick calico quilt. On the hearth was a skillet containing corn bread, which was being cooked by coals heaped around and on top of the iron lid. In the ashes in the fireplace sweet potatoes were roasting. Mam' Judy was in the act of pulling these from the fire when Sissy and Billy drew rein before her door and dismounted.

The old woman was wizened to the point of emaciation. Her brown face, wrinkled and seamed, was thrown into bold relief by a crown of snowy hair surmounted by a bright bandanna headkerchief. A smile showed glittering red gums, guiltless of teeth. Billy called briskly to her. In response, she came to the door, her hands on her hips. On recognizing Billy, she manifested surprise and joy.

"Law, chile," she crooned, "I ain't nuver b'lieved yit you wuz gwine let ole Mam' Judy die 'thout comin' to tell her good-bye. Who dis pretty lil' gal you got wid you?" turning to Sissy.

Billy explained, and added that they had come to get their fortunes told.

He slyly slipped a quantity of small change into her hand.

"I knowed you wuz comin'," the old crone declared. "I seed it in de fire las' night."

When she had made tea to get the grounds, and replenished the fire to make more coals, she announced that only one must remain in the room. Billy found himself pushed outside and the door slammed behind him.

Mam' Judy raked the coals and arranged them to her liking. She poured the tea, and had the girl make a wish.

"Tain't no use fer me to tell you whut's pas' and gone," she began, screwing up her face to lean nearer the coals. "You ain't keerin' bout none dem men, is you, honey?" Sissy laughed non-committally. "Dey been swarmin' roun'," the crone continued. "Yer couldn't stir 'em wid er stick—de sweethearts you has had. But I ain't seein' nary one in dat bunch you lef' behin' you whut you'd spit at. Ain't dat de truf', baby?" Again Sissy fenced with a smile. "De man you loves, de man whut worships de groun' your horse's foot stepped on—he's ra't in callin' distance, now—"

"S-sh!" whispered Sissy in alarm. "He'll hear you. You mustn't tell me what you don't see."

"I ain't gwine tell you haf' I does see. You gwine marry Marse Billy, honey—"

"You mustn't! You mustn't!" cried the girl, distressed. Taking out her purse, she emptied the contents. "Here, I will give you all this not to tell him that. Don't tell him anything about me, Mam' Judy, do you understand? When he comes in here—tell him he is to marry a widow with three little children. Hear?—Mam' Judy, I'll give you the loveliest Christmas present that anybody on the plantation gets—"

Mam' Judy's lean hand caressed the girl's head. "Honey, I ain't tole fortunes for fifty years 'thout learnin' some sense. Don't you worry. Mam' Judy ain't gwine tell no secrets you ax her not to." Her clawlike fingers closed over the money, and it disappeared in the folds of her skirt.

Billy ignored Sissy's suggestion that it was growing late, and gaily ordered her to watch the horses while he was having his fate read.

"There's just one thing I want to know," Billy cut short the preliminaries. "Tell me what it is, Mam' Judy, and I will believe in you as firmly as when I was a boy."

"I knows what dat is, honey," she smiled. "Love done crep' into yeh heart when you warn't lookin'." She folded her arms and beamed on him triumphantly. "I kin describe yoh sweetheart—an' she's de puttiest lil' gal Mam' Judy's eyes is feasted on in many a day." She was crouched over the coals.

"Go on," he commanded.

"She got hair lak hickory leaves, when de fros' teches 'em—all gold and brown and lighted up wid sunshine."

"She has," he encouraged.

"She got skin lak de inside uv er aig-shell—an' er mouth whut de angels mixed up red hawberries ter mark. Ain't Mam' Judy seein' right, Marse Billy? She got two lil' pink ears, lak er crumpled seashell, and her eyes is blue as a bed o' periwinkle flowers in de springtime—"

"Mam' Judy, look close! See what kind of a dress she is wearin'!"

Mam' Judy bent lower. She passed from the coals to the tea grounds. She shut her eyes and apparently went off into a trance.

"Blue!" she finally announced. "It's a blue dress I sees—an' you ain't niver gwine get shoes little ernuff ter fit dem lil' feet."

Bob's boyish voice was heard calling to Sissy outside.

"Hurry!" Billy begged. "Tell me some more. Am I going to marry her? What do you see? Tell me, Mam' Judy!"

"You gwine meet wid er accident. You gwine git—married—"

The door was burst open by Bob. Sissy was at the boy's heels. "Mam' Judy," the boy was calling out, "haven't you got some potatoes baking in those ashes? Give me and Sissy and Billy some of that bully corn bread out of the skillet."

Mam' Judy, the witch, was gone. Mam' Judy, the hostess and cook, stood in her place. She fished potatoes out of the coals, and cut slices of fragrant corn bread for the three hungry hunters. And they ate and laughed and forgot to notice the gathering dusk.

When they had at last started and reached the hill Billy suddenly remembered that he had left his gloves at Mam' Judy's. He told the others to ride on and he would overtake them. Mam' Judy was at the door waiting for him. "I knowed you gwine come back," she greeted him. "I seed it in de fire."

"Mam' Judy," he asked hurriedly and shamefacedly, "did you see it in the fire that I am going to find the girl in the blue dress—the one I am going to marry— Did you see that?"

"You sho' is," she replied solemnly. "You ra't on her track dis minit. Don't let nothin' interfere wid yoh plans, Marse Billy. You'll git her—" He was gone.

How it happened he never knew. But in galloping across the grass-covered slope, Billy's horse suddenly went down into a sink-hole, and he was pitched against a tree. When Sissy and Bob reached him he was unconscious.

Sissy hunted frantically for his heart. It beat faintly. "Go," she directed the boy, "for your father, as quickly as you can. Hurry! I'm afraid to stay here by myself." Her voice was perilously tearful. "Tell him to bring brandy—and everything. Hurry."

When Billy came to himself a few minutes later his head was resting on Sissy's lap, and an occasional tear-drop was splashing on his forehead. She was chafing his wrists and begging him to speak to her. He turned astonished eyes on her face. "Oh," he breathed happily, "it's you!" Then he promptly fainted again.

An hour later, when the doctor and Bob were ministering to the injured man—there proved to be no broken bones, only a sprained ankle—Clothilde was pouring out her sisterly woes to Sissy, and asking that young woman's

advice about the mysterious sweetheart in New York.

"I think we ought to telegraph her," she said, "only I am not supposed to know the first thing about it. Billy told Bob, when he came, that he was engaged to a fine girl—an adorable creature in New York, who had made a man out of him, and all that sort of thing. Now, I am all to blame for his coming down here and getting a sprained ankle; and if I only knew his sweetheart's name and address, I'd send for her to come down and nurse him— And they could get married here. Wouldn't that be jolly, Sissy?"

"Ye-es," Sissy replied, with an effort; "it would."

Billy fretted and fumed mightily over the enforced confinement. Ankle or no ankle, he declared he must go on to New York; but day after day saw him still prone and helpless, with a bandaged foot. His intense annoyance was augmented by Bob's determination, secretly fanned by Clothilde, to write to the girl in New York. This at last became so irritating that Billy's limited stock of patience gave way altogether.

"You go to the devil," he cried savagely. "Quit meddling in my affairs, will you? I'm not going to marry anybody. The whole thing's off!"

He was distracted by the fact that the girl in the blue gown came no more; and that more and more, day by day, her image was getting mixed up with Sissy's. What did he care about Sissy, anyway? he demanded of himself angrily. But suddenly something deep down in his heart asked the point-blank question why he didn't marry Sissy. Sissy had all the attributes of the girl he loved—even to the trick of her voice. And Sissy was living, breathing, pulsating with the sweetness and joy of life. How did he know that the dream maiden of the blue gown, if she really existed, wasn't already married? How did he know—oh, uncomfortable thought!—that, when he saw her, he would after all care to marry her? Dreams sometimes have a way

of developing into waking nightmares.

He rejected these suspicions as unworthy. "I have sworn," he declared doggedly, "to find my girl of the blue gown. I will marry her or no one." He turned his head suddenly. Had he—or had he not—seen a tumbled coiffure of tawny-bronze curls over his shoulder against a disappearing background of blue? He sniffed eagerly. It was the odor of wet plum blossoms.

On Christmas Eve the big old hall, hung with the trophies of a hundred hunts, was unlighted save by the roaring logs of hickory in the fireplace, big enough to roast an ox. On the hearth rug the dogs slept peacefully. From the tables howls of holly and mistletoe sent out spicy woodland odors. Billy coming downstairs for the first time since his accident, found it very good and homelike and warm. He sank down in an armchair. Far away upstairs he could hear the laughing voices of the children being dressed by Mammy for supper. He wondered if Sissy—but Sissy was a tabooed thought. He dismissed her from his mind.

Someone was coming down the stairs.

Billy Rutledge looked, and staggered to his feet blindly.

Down the broad polished steps, set in the rosy glow of the leaping fire, came the lady of his dreams. He clutched a chair and held his breath. She wore the blue gown that had hung in the cleaner's window. It was the same, from the daisy-patterned lace to the jeweled girdle. Her slim hand was idly making its way down the carved balustrade. The fire flared up and caught the sheen of the knot of blue in her bronze coiffure of curls and puffs. She moved slowly down the stairs, half smiling to herself, with downcast eyes. Her little slippers were of satin with rhinestone buckles. Billy threw discretion to the winds. He was at the foot of the stairs, with both hands outstretched for her slender, pink ones. He closed down on them. They were warm and human.

"Oh," he breathed with strange agi-

tation, "don't fade away and leave me this time!" The girl surveyed him with tantalizing, uplifted eyebrows.

"Darling," he entreated, "tell me your name—quick! Don't—I can't stand it—if you elude me another time. Your name; what is it? Who are you?"

"Sissy," a soft voice breathed; "christened Clarissa Caruthers. Don't you know me?" shyly. "I—but you frighten me! Why do you look at me so?"

"You are not Sissy Caruthers," he spoke in a voice strangely unfamiliar. "You are my dream girl sweetheart." He lifted his hand to clear his eyes of possible fairy mists. "Where did you get that blue gown? I left it in New York."

"I sent it to New York nearly two months ago," she replied, a little dazed.

"Was the gown at Louise's?"

She nodded.

"Then, don't you remember," he begged; "can't you remember?" He led her, unresisting, toward the big chair. "Don't trifle with me now, Sissy, darling! You know," eagerly, "you must know all that I have to tell you—how I have loved you from the first night I saw this gown in the cleaner's window—how I have searched for you. Who taught you telepathy, Sissy?"

"Telepathy?" very much bewildered. "I don't know what you mean— But you mustn't stand on that ankle," pushing him toward the easy-chair.

"Come to me." He drew her, unresisting, close to him. He drank in the perfume of plum blossoms and spring rain.

"You witch, you elf," he accused; "you have known all along how I loved you—how I have dreamed of you without knowing you were you. How could you treat me so?"

The girl was hanging over the back of his chair. Her rose-leaf cheek was laid against his lean brown one.

"You are going to marry me, Sissy," he announced.

"Mam' Judy said so," she whispered, close to his ear.

THE SHATTERED TABERNACLE

By G. MARION BURTON

STRONG and well built was the Tabernacle—the lines of it were beautiful, straight and clean. The Man had built it stone on stone from his youth on. Proudly he gazed on the well modeled halls; gladly he caroled when in through the dormer windows streamed the pure light of the sun.

Kind gardens clustered about it, tenderly sheltering its walls. The song of birds turned these gardens into one full-toned note of joy. Content, Peace-of-Mind and Happiness dwelt within the heart of the gardens.

Wine knocked at the door of the Tabernacle. An insistent knock it was. Open swung the door, for, thought the Man, wherefore deny such a merry guest? A transient? No! He dwelt in the stronghold of the Tabernacle until the stones thereof became stained to his own ruddy color. Closer and closer to his breast the Man clutched his demon guest. Boon companions they.

"I have friends," quoth Wine; "let them enter also." So saying he called them.

Dice clattered gaily against the window-pane, clamoring for admission.

"Enter," sang the Man. Blithely they played, Dice, Wine and the Man. Madly swung the lights in the Tabernacle. It reeled and tottered with the exhaustion of excess, but ever the Man cried, "More!"

From out the darkness sang a voice, sweet and of strange allure. The Man sprang to the sound, fearing to lose it.

"Oh, come within," he called, and Woman entered, pregnant with subtle enticement.

Dice rattled with content. Wine spilled from the joy of her, and Woman inhabited the Tabernacle, drawing the Man ever farther into the *Land of Abandoned Hopes*.

Suddenly, out crashed the lights! Winds howled like Demons! Strange *Eyes* and *Thoughts* crept through the wine-rotted walls.

"My Strength—my Cleanness—my Integrity!" gasped the Man as the doomed Tabernacle fell about him.

And above the sound of the wind rose the triumphant song of the Wine—the Dice danced a bacchanal, and on the Ruins sat the Woman, a smile on her seductive face, a metallic laugh in her weary throat. "We have conquered again," she leered.

WIFE—Would it please you, dear, if I learned another language?

HUSBAND—Yes, it would delight me infinitely.

WIFE—Well, which one shall I study?

HUSBAND—The sign language.

THE THREE GAMBOLIERS

By HULBERT FOOTNER

EDNA, Countess of Yetholme, spending the night in the Wigwam, a little hotel in Blackfoot supported by the English set, was wakened by a low, persistent knocking on her bedroom door; it was Parrott, her maid, clad in a kimono and very untidy about the head.

"There's a lady asking for you, my lady!" exclaimed Parrott, breathless with amazement.

"What time is it?" murmured the Countess, none too pleasantly; for she was of a comfortable habit and resented excitement in the middle of the night.

"Three o'clock, my lady," said Parrott impressively.

"Good patience!" cried the Countess plaintively. "Who is it?"

"Never saw her before. Very well dressed and quiet-mannered, my lady. Has a person with her I think is her maid."

"What on earth does she want?"

"Didn't tell me, my lady. Says she, 'Please tell the Countess I must see her for a moment on a matter of the most urgent importance—something that cannot wait until morning.'"

"Well, show her into my sitting-room and come back and help me," said the Countess, curiosity getting the better of her love of ease.

With an ample jointure and no responsibilities the Countess Edna found life as a dowager of forty-two very agreeable. After twenty years of experience as the dutiful wife of a trying peer and the anxious mother of two dangerous girls, she had by the death of the former and the marriages of the latter lately found herself free to

follow her own sweet will; and like other suddenly liberated persons, had immediately experienced the desire to see life. To the Countess "seeing life" meant a trip to Canada to visit her husband's brother on his great horse ranch west of the town of Blackfoot. Here, to tell the truth, she had been very much disappointed; there was not a single bucking bronco among the honorable Alfred Anway's stock—only blooded hackneys such as she saw every day in the Park at home; and the cowboys she had expected to see were scarcely to be distinguished from English grooms. As for her Canadian sister-in-law, instead of the breezy, unconventional Westerner she longed to meet, she found an exaggerated great lady whose airs got on the nerves of the honest Lady Edna. The other women of the district were no more amusing; they all copied her own manner and strove to entertain her with painful little imitations of the very functions she had fled from England to escape for a time.

Lady Edna consoled herself with three graceless youths, in whom she fancied she perceived something genuinely Western, to wit: her nephew, Lord Algernon Craucester, Algy's cousin, Baron Fabien de Maurillac, half English, half French, and the honorable Bill Trefusis, Algy's "partner." Until the arrival of the Countess "the three gamboliers," as they called themselves, had been outcasts from polite English society around Blackfoot. Between remittances Algy and Bill eked out a mysterious existence in a deplorable shack up Nose Creek way, while Fabien, who was of a more independent charac-

ter, was for the time being driving a milk wagon about town with true aristocratic carelessness. On quarter days they joined forces, cashed their drafts and for a few days cut a wide swath in town, which more often than not ended in the Blackfoot lock-up. But Lady Edna knew nothing about this. She had a soft spot in her heart for boys, no doubt because she had longed in vain to have one of her own, so her blond, curly-headed nephew had no difficulty whatever in worming himself into her affections and he had promptly introduced his two friends.

Induced by Lady Edna's glowing letters home, or for other reasons, her brother, the old Marquis of Ommaney, Algy's father, had suddenly decided on a flying trip through western Canada and California, and he was to stop off at Blackfoot early the next morning. Algy, like many another remittance man, was, for his misdeeds, an exile from home, and the Countess was bent on effecting a reconciliation between father and son; hence her presence at the Wigwam. The transcontinental train, as everyone knows, reaches Blackfoot at half-past four in the morning—when it is on time; it had been arranged that the boys were to meet the Marquis at the train while the Countess was to have Algy and his father to breakfast with her.

In the meantime she had entertained the three remittance men at dinner at the Wigwam that night, and did not remember ever having enjoyed a dinner more. The gamboliers, who scarcely possessed a whole suit between them, in order to appear in evening dress had levied on the wardrobes of their friends, with a result decidedly picturesque; for Algy seemed to be submerged in his clothes, broad-shouldered Fabien was bursting out of his, and Bill, who had preserved a dress suit of his own through many vicissitudes, presented a sadly creased and moth-eaten exterior. But no sartorial defects could disturb their *nonchalance*; and the Countess could hardly decide which was the most entertaining—little Algy with his frank boyishness, handsome Fabien with his

hawk nose, his crimson cheeks and his dark eyes blazing with animation, or dear old Bill, long, pallid and emaciated, whose pale blue eyes were always anxiously in pursuit of some lapsed joke, and who, without suspecting it, was apt to be the funniest of the trio. Algy and Fabien barely made the Countess's age between them; Bill was almost as old as she, but he retained that faded air of youth which may linger in younger sons—and actors, to almost any age.

All of the three gamboliers took the same naively arrogant tone toward the world, but the Countess who, kindly and tolerant as she was, was likewise an aristocrat of a long line, could hardly find it in her heart to blame them for that. It appeared from their talk that the raggeder they became, the more top-lofty their attitude to the common and prosperous townspeople. Not that Lady Edna was a fool either; she took their humorous and well-glossed stories of their own doings with several grains of salt, and had more than once found herself wondering what their lives were really like. She was to learn—from her mysterious early morning callers.

Clad in one of her complicated "loose things," the Countess paused for an instant on the threshold of the door between her bedroom and sitting-room full of curiosity. The women had not seated themselves, but were both standing in the center of the room watching the ornate iron clock on the mantel. The principal figure, she saw, was that of a handsome woman slenderer than herself, who looked thirty-two and was probably thirty-eight; beyond that she could not place her. She was as much at ease in the Countess's sitting-room as Lady Edna herself, nor did she show any trace of the excitement to be expected in such an untimely caller. She had the fresh complexion which, if it is art, conceals art, and the guarded blue eye of many a woman Lady Edna had known in London; her mouth was good-humored and prone to a quiet smile; her manner as bland as the Countess's own could be. She wore a dark green street dress of a fit and style such as Lady Edna had not supposed

ever penetrated to the Northwest, and a little hat at once modest and daring. In one of her irreproachably gloved hands she was carrying a shagreen bag of curious and expensive workmanship; and what the Countess marveled at most, in her ears she wore a pair of perfectly-matched pink pearls of a size and luster which would have made talk in London, not to say Blackfoot. In her perplexity the Countess shot a glance at the other woman. From her plain black dress she looked to be, as Parrott had said, a maid; yet she had uncommonly fine eyes, Lady Edna observed. They were honest brown eyes set wide apart in her head; just now the lids were swollen as if from weeping. If the mistress was at ease, the maid was plainly suppressing some strong emotion. Lady Edna wondered fleetingly why she should feel so drawn to a stranger of such a humble station.

As soon as the lady in green perceived the Countess she said in a pleasant but non-committal voice, "You won't ask me to apologize for disturbing you when you learn my errand. It's about your nephew."

Lady Edna felt a decided misgiving.

"Lord Algy and his two friends," said the lady in green deprecatingly, "are in jail."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Countess, with a round-eyed display of astonishment. It was a characteristic of her ample style of utterance to pronounce the "y" sound short, like "e."

"And as I understand he was to have met his father in an hour"—continued the lady in green.

"Why, the boy's whole future depends on this meeting!" said the Countess in distress. As the dreadful consequences forced themselves fully on her, her eyes became wider and wider. "Good heavens!—the Marquis! To find his son in jail—his name bandied about town—he'd never get over it! Something must be done at once!"

"That's why I came to you," said the lady in green.

"Oh, the little wretch!" exclaimed poor Lady Edna. "Why did he have to choose tonight?"

"You shouldn't have given them champagne for dinner!" came with startling unexpectedness from the girl in black, accompanied with a flash of her strange eyes. "They had promised not to drink anything."

The Lady Edna's aristocratic eyebrows made two half-moons again. "Bless my soul!" she exclaimed inwardly to herself.

"Nellie!" said the lady in green admonishingly to her supposed maid. "Of course there are men in town I could have gone to," she said, turning to Lady Edna, "but it would have been impossible to keep the matter quiet. The boys are not liked in town," she added demurely.

"I suppose money will be necessary," said the Countess, not without an ugly suspicion, "and I have scarcely any with me."

Her doubtful look was not lost on the lady in green. "That is not what I came for," she said quickly. "I charge myself with that. I have brought plenty for the purpose."

"Then what can I do?" asked Lady Edna, surprised and helpless.

"If you would go to the police station and get him out—" suggested the lady in green.

"The police station!" gasped the poor Countess; but to her credit be it said, the urgency of the case was such that she was prepared to dismiss selfish considerations. "Why me?" she looked rather than asked.

The sure eyes of the lady in green fell for a second. "I can't go myself," she said quietly. "As it is, I'm taking a great risk in coming inside the city limits after dark."

At this strange reply the Countess's eyebrows went higher than ever; but not to be outdone in *savoir faire* by the unknown, for the present she forbore asking questions.

"Nellie has already done what she could," continued the other, "but the police are very much exasperated; it needs you to win them over. I have a cab at the door. You will not be seen."

The Countess saw no help for it, so prepared to go.

"Ten minutes," she said briefly, as she returned to her bedroom.

When she rejoined the others that demure half-smile might have been seen again on the face of the lady in green. It was not really a smile, but merely the appearance of a dimple in either cheek. Perhaps her amusement was excited by the Countess's idea of the proper dress in which to visit the police station; certainly with her ample, silken draperies and evening wrap, Lady Edna presented a strong contrast to her trim conductress. She was bare-headed, of course; it would have seemed preposterous to her to wear a hat in a cab after nightfall. As they boarded the cab Lady Edna dimly remembered having been told there was but one cab in Blackfoot which was called the "joy wagon" and driven by a character rejoicing in the sobriquet of "Slimy Dick"—but she was already beginning to take things for granted. As soon as they were seated she asked for particulars of Lord Algy's accident.

"They came into town tonight, mutually agreed not to go into a bar until after they met the train," said the lady in green; "but the champagne set them off."

"I didn't realize," murmured Lady Edna contritely.

"After visiting several places, they raked together all the R. M.'s in town."

"R. M.'s?" queried Lady Edna.

"Remittance men," explained the lady in green. "And charged up and down Roland Avenue, singing 'Rule Britannia' and defying the 'bally colonists,' as they say. Frenchy calls the townspeople Republicans. The police never pay any attention until they begin to break things. It wasn't until they had cleaned out Mat Runyon's place that they were taken in."

She stopped as if that were all; but the Countess was far from satisfied. "Cleaned out?" she queried, with a mental picture of mops and pails.

"Raided the place—commandeered it" explained the lady in green, searching for an expression familiar to aristocratic ears. "They had gathered quite a gang by that time. Mat runs an all-

night restaurant on Roland Avenue. There is a long-standing grouch between him and the boys. Tonight they took him unawares and tied him and his waiter to chairs and put them in one of the alcoves. Then they served lunch to all comers. Bill cooked, Lord Algy served it over the counter and Frenchy stood out on the sidewalk inviting everybody in."

"What happened then?" demanded Lady Edna breathlessly, as the teller of the story again paused.

"Some friend of Mat's telephoned for the police, I suppose," said the lady in green in an off-hand tone—plainly the tale was a common one. "They gathered the night force together, four men, and rushed the place. The boys intrenched themselves behind the counter and gave a good account of themselves, of course, using vegetables at long range and kitchen things hand-to-hand—but a frying pan is no defense against a night stick; it crumples right up in your hand."

"Does it?" murmured Lady Edna unconsciously.

"And the railway gang pitched in with the police—they're always looking for a chance to get back at the aristocrats. The boys were soon carted off to the station on a lorry. It's just as I always tell them," concluded the lady in green with a vexed air; "the cops are bound to win out in the end."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed poor Lady Edna with something of the feeling of a novice to whom terrible mysteries are revealed. She darted a glance of awe at the elegantly-dressed woman by her side, who chatted so familiarly about the darker side of life, who knew so much more than she did. "How did you hear about it?" she asked.

"The boys sent for Nellie," said the lady in green, "and as soon as she learned how things stood, she came over for me. She walked all the way, too—my place is three miles out of town. Fortunately Dick was there with the carriage and we drove right back to get you."

This explanation was no explanation to Lady Edna. If the strange Nellie

was not the other woman's maid, who was she? She had no opportunity to question further, for at that moment the cab stopped.

The three women alighted on the wooden sidewalk of a side street in the meaner part of Blackfoot. All the little buildings around were tight and rayless, and there was neither a sound nor a breath of wind to ruffle the ghostly stillness. In the east a faint streak of light green was showing: the flavor of the thin, early morning air of the elevated plains was like nothing Lady Edna had ever smelled in England.

"At the end of the block," said the lady in green in a low voice. "The wooden building with the bell on the gable. Sergeant McPhatter is in charge. He's Scotch and very conceited. We'll wait outside. You'll have to bail out all three, because one won't leave the others. They'll probably ask a hundred and fifty on account of the damage. Here's the money."

So Lady Edna dutifully bore down on the police station, her slippers tapping the wooden sidewalk delicately, her draperies billowing around her and the roll of bills clasped tightly in her glove. Her heart sank with every step; for the appearance of the Countess of Yetholme in the Blackfoot police station at half-past three in the morning was a horrible picture to contemplate: fortunately, she thought, she could hardly be known by sight in town. Through the window she saw to her relief that the Sergeant was alone. He was tipped back in his chair beside an old-fashioned desk in the corner, grimly bathing an angry lump over his eye with a wet handkerchief.

As Lady Edna opened the door his chair dropped to the floor with a jolt, which corresponded to the fall of his lower jaw. Assuredly such a sight had never been seen within those grimy walls. Lady Edna made the Sergeant think of nothing else but a colored picture of "After the Ball," such as comes with a Christmas magazine. Unfortunately her very first words recalled the memory of the lump over his eye.

"I understand that Lord Algernon Craucester has been arrested," she said breathlessly.

"Yes, *ma'am!*" said Sergeant McPhatter emphatically, endeavoring to convey in the two words a sense of all the wrongs the police had suffered at the hands of the young scapegrace and his companions. He opened a blank book lying on the desk and pointed dramatically to the latest entry. Lady Edna looked over his shoulder and this is what she read:

*Lord Algernon Craucester
Baron Fabien de Maurillac
Hon. William Trefusis
Drunk and Disorderly
1.10 A.M.*

*Constables McPhatter, Pink, Appleyard
and McGonigle*

The poor Countess felt quite faint. "Bless my soul!" she murmured weakly. "Craucester written in a police blotter!" she added to herself. "It would kill the Marquis!"

At first the Sergeant, while respectful, flatly declined to entertain any proposal for the liberation of the gamboliers. "They ain't slep' it off yet," he quite reasonably protested. "How do I know but what they'll go right back and begin where they left off!"

"I will be responsible," said the Countess.

"Begging your pardon, *ma'am*, but you could hardly manage the three of them single-handed. It took four officers to bring them in!"

However, in the end, of course, the lady got her way. But when the Sergeant, having unlocked the door to the cells in the rear, ushered the gamboliers blinking into the light, the wretched Countess was sorry she had made him do it. Such a deplorable sight as that presented by her three young friends was surely never offered to a noblewoman's eyes before. Little blond Algy, who came first, was almost unrecognizable by reason of a bruised eye, already purpling, and a split lip; his light overcoat was plastered all over with gummy black mud. Fabien's face, too, was a mass of cuts and bruises, out of which his dancing black eyes gleamed devilishly. He had lost

his overcoat in the scrimmage, and the borrowed dress coat had been split from tail to collar; he was wearing half and the other half was thrown carelessly over his arm. Apparently Bill's pallid face had escaped serious mutilation; but someone had smashed his hat over his ears, where it stayed. The other two had lost their head coverings. The gamboliers were quite unabashed at their situation; and having reached that perfectly irresponsible state where the most extraordinary things appear quite natural, they evinced no surprise at the sight of Lady Edna. The Honorable Bill, mindful of good manners, tugged at his firmly-fixed hat, but only succeeded in carrying away the brim. This he held against his breast with an air, blissfully unconscious that the crown was still on his head.

They insisted on bidding an affectionate farewell to Sergeant McPhatter, which used up several precious minutes. When Lady Edna finally succeeded in shepherding them to the sidewalk, she was greatly relieved to find that her two companions had advanced under the shadow of the police station and were waiting to aid her.

"The train is on time," whispered the lady in green. "We have barely half an hour!"

"But see the state they're in!" exclaimed the distracted Countess. "Bless my soul! Now that we've got them out, what shall we do with them?"

"Leave that to me," said the lady in green.

She seized the exuberant Fabien, who was declaiming to the dawn in broken English, and marched him smartly down the sidewalk. Lady Edna prepared to follow with her nephew, meaning to try to bring him to his senses en route; but to her astonishment he was cut out from under her very nose by the mysterious Nellie, who steered him after Fabien. Lady Edna heard her lecturing him with more freedom than she as an aunt had felt warranted in employing. The Honorable Bill fell to the Countess's share; he offered her his arm with a deferential air, and made digni-

fied conversation in rather a spongy voice.

Fabien, in the van, was behaving scandalously. He seized the hands of the lady in green and galloped her down the sidewalk until at the corner she managed to wrench herself free and soundly boxed his ears. Little Algy listed heavily on the girl in black, whose strong young frame was well braced to support him. He paid not the slightest attention to her admonitions, having so much to say himself that, like a child, he seemed to be in despair of getting it all out. The progress of the party, as may well be imagined, made a startling interruption in the brooding stillness of the street; and Lady Edna trembled at the chance of discovery. She did not know that when anyone in Black-foot is awakened by that kind of a noise he simply turns over in bed. The poor lady hoped she was dreaming and kept herself up with the fiction that she would presently wake up safe in the Wigwam, with a pillow to bury her hot cheeks in.

The lady in green, without bothering about the cab, piloted them over the two blocks which lie between the police station and the Imperial. It occurred to Lady Edna that the name of this establishment was sadly belied by its obvious character; and as a matter of fact there are seven better hotels, even in Black-foot. At the door of the Imperial the three women held a short council of war, while the irrepressible gamboliers insisted on going through a figure of the lancers.

"Nellie says they've taken a room here for the night," said the lady in green. "We'll have to take them upstairs and fix them up."

"Into this place?" exclaimed Lady Edna in horror.

"But we can't let them go alone," said the lady in green. "They'd only fall asleep, and we haven't a minute to spare. Of course you can stay here if you like; but while Nellie is getting them black coffee and I make their faces presentable, you could be mending Fabien's coat."

"Very well," said Lady Edna desperately.

They made a terrible racket getting up the two flights of stairs, and the poor Countess's heart died within her; but the Imperial is well used to these late—or early—home-comings. Not a head appeared at any of the doors. Arrived at the gamboliers' tiny room, the six of them could barely crowd inside. Nellie promptly deposited Lord Algy in a chair by the door and disappeared in quest of coffee. The energetic lady in green placed the only other chair under the light, and pushing Fabien into it, threw both pieces of his coat on the bed; then producing a needle and thread from the shagreen bag, she handed it to Lady Edna. The Countess sat on the bed and attacked the coat with unaccustomed fingers, while the Honorable Bill, disposing his long frame negligently against the head of the bed, bent over her in a correct ballroom attitude and continued to utter pleasantries. Opposite them Lord Algy was snoring gently and threatening to fall off his chair at any moment.

Between her laborious stitches Lady Edna wonderingly watched the resourceful lady in green as, sitting beside her on the bed, she proceeded to humanize Fabien's battered countenance. All sorts of things appeared in succession out of the shagreen bag—collodion, cold cream, grease paint, rouge and powder; and under the deft, quick strokes of the operator, Fabien seemed to grow a new skin before the Countess's very eyes. White grease paint and powder likewise put an entirely different complexion on his stained shirt front. During this performance Fabien chattered away in his inimitably expressive way, with an affectionate filial freedom which made Lady Edna gasp.

"Dear Pinky!" she heard him say, "you would have died laughin' to see ol' Mat Runyon go down under one of his own fryin' pans! Bang-o on his bal' pate! He open his eye and his mout' so funny, then bump!—'e is sittin' on the floor. We tie his hands

wit' napkins and stick one of his own cigars in his mout'. 'E spit it out! Dear ol' Pinky, if you could only 'ave been there! What fun!"

Who shall say but that somewhere deep down Lady Edna had a fleeting wish that she might have seen it too? After all, she came of robust Cavalier stock.

In a surprisingly short time the mysterious Nellie returned with a pitcher of steaming hot coffee and cups on a tray; also an outfit of caps and clean collars for the trio, and actually an overcoat for Fabien. Where she had procured all this remained a mystery to Lady Edna.

Having finished Fabien, the lady in green changed places on the bed with Lady Edna, the better to reach Lord Algy's face; meanwhile Nellie was filling the coffee-cups on the window sill. The sting of collodion on his wounds brought little Lord Algy up all standing; and, half awake, he assumed a very pugnacious attitude toward the ministrations of the lady in green.

"For heaven's sake, behave yourself, Algy!" said Lady Edna impatiently. "All this trouble is on your account! I'm ashamed of you!"

Nellie suddenly put the pitcher on the bureau, and darting to Lord Algy's side put an arm around him and faced Lady Edna with stormy eyes.

"He isn't a little boy to be lectured before everybody," she remonstrated. "He's no worse than the others! Wake up, dear," she continued to Algy. "You promised me you'd brace up."

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Lady Edna to herself. "What am I assisting at?" Meanwhile the lady in green, with that demure dimple in either cheek, assiduously painted Lord Algy's bruises.

Strong black coffee brought the three gamboliers a little nearer to the realization of their situation—thereby only increasing the difficulty of handling them, thought Lady Edna, when she heard their ideas begin to come out.

"Dear ol' guv'nor!" gurgled the boyish lordling. "I'll just embrace the

old boy and cry down his neck. I say! won't he be jolly glad to see me, though!"

"Bad form!" commented the Honorable Bill severely. "As an Englishman and a gentleman you just want to grip his hand and say, 'Howdo, guv'nor! Tiptop night, ain't it?'"

"'Ain't' is rotten bad grammar," remarked Lord Algy calmly. "Ain't it, Aunt Edna?"

"'Ang it all, he's a sport!" cried Fabien gaily. "I'm goin' to tell him the 'ole story. His ears ain't too tender, w'at? If the Markee don' laugh w'en I tell him 'ow Sarge McPhatter got a fry egg slap in the mout' and swallow the mos' of it, he ain't wort'y to be Blondy's pater!"

"That's all right," said Algy, obstinately sentimental. "I'm the child of his old age. I'm Benjamin. I shall cast myself on his bosom and say, 'Jacob, behold thy son!'"

"I t'ought you said the ol' boy had trouble with the Jews," remarked Fabien.

"Not the Jews in the Bible, you ass," returned Lord Algy, with scorn.

"At four-thirty A.M., after four days on the train," said the Honorable Bill with serious gravity, "I would strongly advise against tryin' on any Benjamin and Jacob racket with the old gentleman."

"'E'll be t'ankful for a couple of touches, I guess," said Fabien. "We'll have to bring him down here. The night clerk'll serve us anyt'ing we want in the coat closet."

Lady Edna stood aghast at the mental picture of the magnificent little Marquis being asked to have a "touch" in the coat closet of the Imperial.

The lady in green gave Algy's restored countenance a final pat with a piece of chamois, and sat back to observe the effect. Barring a slight swelling here and there, he seemed, under the electric light at least, almost his fresh, pink little self.

"It's a blessing the train's on time," she remarked to Lady Edna. "Daylight would give the whole snap away."

Nellie took the gamboliers out into

the hall, one at a time, and administered a violent brushing. The Countess completed her seam and surveyed it ruefully. She had not held a needle for a long time and it must be confessed that the back of the dress coat exhibited a sadly puckered appearance.

"Never mind," said the lady in green, dimpling again. "Nellie has an overcoat for him."

Through the open window came the sound of an engine whistle, not very far off.

The lady in green jumped to her feet. "The train!" she cried. "Boys, are you sober enough to understand me?"

Violent protestations from the gamboliers.

"Then listen! Don't you dare to open your mouths without orders. Her Ladyship will do the talking. You sit tight and we'll give you your cues!"

The gamboliers climbed down, as they would have expressed it. "Right-o, Pinkie!" they cried. "Lead on! We're your men!"

Coats and caps were thrust on them; the whole party descended the stairs like an avalanche, and hand in hand in couples, covered the single block to the station at a run. "Nothing matters now," thought the Countess, running with the rest, "but if London could see me! Bless my soul, what a scandal!" They arrived breathless on the platform as, with grinding brakes, the long transcontinental express drew to a stop.

Everything passed off beautifully. The stiff little Marquis was plainly gratified by the filial feeling which had led his son to bring his friends to meet him in spite of the unearthly hour; and under the watchful eye of Nellie, and prompted by her whispers, Lord Algy bore himself with exactly the proper measure of deference and affection. To discount any outbreak of hilarity on the part of the gamboliers, Lady Edna allowed the Marquis to understand that the party had come direct to the station from a late affair at the barracks; which seemed perfectly natural to His Lordship. Her greatest anxiety was that she might not

be able to keep him out of town until after the police court ordeal later in the day; but upon her representations that it had been impossible to secure fit accommodations in Blackfoot, he agreed it would be wiser to go on up the line to the railroad hotel at Cairngorm Hot Springs, where Lady Edna and Lord Algy could join him in the afternoon. She breathed again.

The train waits ten minutes in Blackfoot. In the bustle attendant upon rechecking His Lordship's trunks, Lady Edna managed to avoid the necessity for general introductions. The lady in green had her hands full keeping the exuberant Fabien in the background, but Nellie was quite prominently in the Marquis's eye; and he seemed to be impressed with her air of quiet watchfulness over Algy. He intimated to his sister that a marriage with a good, worthy person of the country might be the saving of the young scamp, and suggested that, since the young woman was a friend of Lady Edna's, she might be invited to join them at the Springs. His sister shuddered. Indeed, she thought ten minutes was quite long enough a stay in Blackfoot for the Marquis; it was growing lighter every minute and the gamboliers were getting hard to control. It was with a great sigh of relief that she saw the train start at last and pull out with the Marquis on the rear platform, including them all in his smile of condescending approval.

A few minutes later Lady Edna and the lady in green paused at the gate of the Wigwam in mutual embarrassment; the joy-wagon was waiting at the curb.

"My family owes you a great deal for what you've done tonight," began the Countess after an awkward pause; "and I—I don't know whom to thank."

The lady in green looked at her in surprise. "I thought you knew who I was," she said.

As Lady Edna looked at her one of her eardrops flashed a soft, pinky reflection from the electric light at the corner; with that tiny gleam Lady Edna remembered bits of Blackfoot tea-table gossip and understood at last.

"They call you the—the Pink Pearl?" she murmured interrogatively.

The lady in green nodded her head and looked away.

"So glad to have met you," murmured Lady Edna automatically—but her sense of humor came to her aid. "I like you," she said in her amplest manner.

"I like you, too," said the lady in green softly; "and I didn't expect to."

"Do you think your maid can be trusted to get them safely back to the Imperial?" asked the Countess after another pause.

"Nellie isn't my maid," said the other quickly.

Lady Edna's eyebrows went up again. "Then who is Nellie?" she murmured in distress.

"I suppose you have to know," said the lady in green uncomfortably. "She's known as Nellie Foster, a dining-room girl at the Imperial. Her legal name is—"

"Yes?" demanded Lady Edna breathlessly.

"Lady Algernon Craucester," said the lady in green.

A MODERN AMENDMENT

A FOX came upon some grapes in an arbor, and though he tried repeatedly to reach them there was nothing doing.

When he paused to rest, a mink who had witnessed the performance suggested: "There are lots of others just as good within easy reach."

"Oh, no," replied the fox, with a wag of his head, "those high ones that I can't reach are the only ones that look good to me."

NEWYORKITIS

By HELEN HAMILTON DUDLEY

IT was the night of his stag dinner—his farewell to bachelorhood and all the charms thereof—and he presided in a princely way over the well-laden table around which clustered his bachelor brothers, with many smiles and affectionate quibs for him, and more champagne than anything else . . . alas for champagne! What deviltry and forgetfulness lurk in its amber bubbles!

The next day, at high noon, he was to be married. A wonderful girl, he reflected, all rainbow dreams and pure exquisiteness—fresh and serene, like the quiet fall of a dawn shower, with scarlet and gold flames locked in her heart for his hand to loosen into leaping magnificence.

His eyes grew misty. What a wonderful woman! . . . And what wonderful champagne! He tossed his cloak of abstraction aside to look gratefully at the lackey who refilled his glass. How many glasses had he consumed—how many quarts, perhaps!—since his stag party began? . . . Pish! what did it matter? One can only be married, for the first time, once in a life, and farewell to bachelorhood should be a rare, lingering kiss upon the lips of Fate. He looked about him. There were Tom and Bob and Larry and old Charley—God bless him!—and Harry, who was the most magnificent halfback that ever graced the heroic football ranks of any college; and Dick, who never got into trouble, but was always the instigator of all campus deviltry.

. . . College! The husband-to-be looked upon his old friends with wistful eyes, reflecting sadly that henceforth he would be an outsider—always wel-

come among them, of course, but vaguely yet surely an outsider. A furtive blur curtained his vision, but gleamed into a mellow smile as the ever observant lackey emptied a replenishing amber cascade into his glass . . . yes, excellent champagne!

Ah, they were singing now! With arms entwined as they sat about the table, their eyes upon the husband-to-be and their sparkling golden glasses raised to him. He smiled his appreciation and joined in the roystering chorus which they all shouted so lustily with accompaniment of tapping feet and the ringing of knives and forks against porcelain dishes.

"Wow!" It ended in a shout which shook the rafters and they arose to their feet as one man.

"Bumpers!" yelled Dick, springing upon his chair, and bumpers it was, with the attentive lackey filling the goblets as quickly as they were emptied . . . assuredly, wonderful champagne!

"Gad!" exclaimed Dick as they lounged into their chairs again, "that makes me think—"

"Don't," admonished Charley, with his usual gentleness, "your brain can't stand it."

"I have a date," continued Dick, unruffled.

"Vulgar wording that young man uses," murmured Harry into his champagne while he kicked Tom under the table and winked suggestively at the lackey as he emptied his glass.

"You c-can't keep any engagement unless we're i-in on it," averred Larry's voice, cheerfully serene above an ominous hiccough.

"That's the idea!" Tom exclaimed

eagerly. "I'll wager it's Mazie Montague, of the Follies . . . If it is, by Jove, I'm with you."

"We'll all go!" the words came as from one throat; the bachelors arose and looked, as with one pair of eyes, at the husband-to-be. "Come on," they tempted him.

He hesitated.

"Mazie always has a string of marvelous fairies floating in her wake," said Dick graciously. "I'm sure you're all welcome to join me."

"Good of him," remarked Tom into the stiff, cropped mustache he had lately raised, and he drained his glass thirstily. Then, feeling the sudden silence, he looked up with inquiring eyes.

Before them, meditatively twirling his champagne goblet, sat the husband-to-be, and standing about him, patiently awaiting his decision, gathered the restless bachelors.

"Come on," urged the intrepid Richard; "you've been there before and you can go again."

The husband-to-be shifted in his chair.

"She has an awfully cozy little flat," sighed Charley, flecking an imaginary grain of dust from his coat sleeve.

The husband-to-be chewed his lips reflectively.

"For the last time," said Larry, with soft artfulness.

The husband-to-be raised unfathomable eyes.

"It would be a bully finish to the night," Tom told his signet ring—"sort of a liqueur to the demi-tasse, don't you know—"

The husband-to-be arose.

"I'm with you."

They clapped him upon the shoulder and filed out, Dick carrying beneath one arm an icy champagne bottle, whose golden contents he could not find it in his heart to leave behind, and whose moistness trickled down his immaculate coat as he went.

"For he's a jolly good f-fellow!" hiccupped Larry, appreciatively, and with a shout they repeated it until the deserted room echoed it after they had

gone. . . . "For he's a jolly good f-fellow!"

The husband-to-be awoke with a start. Into every corner of his room, glinting across the silver brushes and cut-glass bottles spread in profuse disorder upon his chiffonier, flowed the mellow splendor of the afternoon sunshine.

The husband-to-be endeavored to think, but because of a splitting pain in his head his brain refused him service. So he lay quiescent, looking stupidly at the familiar surroundings. His dull eyes finally rested upon his hat—why was it on the chandelier?—and discovered one shoe carefully suspended from the doorknob, mateless, lonely. The husband-to-be arose on one elbow and knit his brow in a fierce effort to think. . . . He had some engagement, some very pressing engagement, for that day, he was sure. That day? What day was it? . . . What time was it? His dull eyes sought the face of a clock held in the arms of a fat, silver cupid, but its pendulum moved not and it gazed back at him impassive, tickless, with its motionless hands spread out across its white, gleaming face. The husband-to-be wondered where his watch was. Presently his roving, intensely puzzled eyes discovered it upon a chair nearby. He reached for it slowly, but it, also, ticked not.

"What the devil—" he pondered dully, "what *was* that engagement—that pressing engagement?"

The door opened suddenly. The intrepid Richard, fresh from a Turkish bath, entered, and appraising the room with swift eyes, laughed loudly. Then he stopped, instantly repentant.

The husband-to-be looked at his visitor frowningly.

"How'd you get in?" he questioned in a feeble voice.

Richard smiled cheerfully.

"Your man said you gave him orders to admit no one, and that you were not to be disturbed until Cleopatra was seen lunching at Martin's . . . rather good line that! You're always so

ripping clever when you're inebriated! But I thrust him aside with the assurance that you'd be perfectly delighted to see me, and came in."

"Good of you," murmured the husband-to-be, trying desperately to think.

Richard sat upon the side of his bed.

"You've awakened, like Byron, to find yourself famous, do you know it, old fellow?"

The husband-to-be, not comprehending, merely stared. Richard grinned again with maddening cheerfulness.

"Your wedding came off at high noon today without a groom, and really I'm devilish sorry—without a bride."

The husband-to-be sat up stiffly, his wide eyes fastened upon the debonair Richard in ineffable dismay, his mouth open, speechless.

"Yes," continued Richard inexorably, "the papers are full of it—*your* name is made! As almost best man I thought I had the first option of breaking the happy news to you."

The husband-to-be finally found words.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed wildly, "*that* was my pressing engagement!" his eyes fixed upon the intrepid Richard in frozen horror. "But—with no bride! . . . where was Anita?"

"I'm devilish sorry, old fellow; three hours before the time set for the ceremony she bolted with Phil Carton. No one knows where they have gone."

There was a long silence. Presently the husband-to-be stirred, as with a sudden resolution.

"What time is it?" he asked.

Richard looked at his watch and smiled ruefully.

"Too late to call back the wedding guests," he replied—"five o'clock."

With a spring the husband-to-be got out of bed and rang for his man.

"What are you going to do?" questioned the intrepid Richard, in vague alarm.

"That farewell dinner isn't going to be wasted! . . . I'm going over and propose to Evelyn Sears."

CLAY GODS

By CORA BLOOMFIELD McELROY

'TIS not so much that you have ceased to love me,
Nor that your heart is turned away from me
Rather you who seemed so far above me
Should now inconstant and unfaithful be.

'Tis not my heart is bleeding 'neath its quiet cover,
Nor that I move in anguish all life through,
But this the cruellest thought, O fickle lover,
That I am now a finer thing than you.

A MAN pays his club bill with fond reminiscences, his grocer's with shrieks for economy.

PAQUITA

By BILLEE GLYNN

ROMANCE and Paquita! For three days of flower-flung merriment had I been looking for the two. Nothing else, indeed, but such an instinct could have taken me to the rose carnival in the little California town. Yes, it must have been Paquita—for never before had I seen anything half so romantic. Paquita! I sigh over the name even now. Never before had the saucy tilt of a woman's chin appeared so impossibly aggravating, or lash-drooped eyes so utterly irresponsible—and I, Frederick Marsden, world-wanderer and Bohemian, was somewhat of a connoisseur in eyes, too!

Paquita! I was sure the citizen beside me the first time she passed had called her that! Why, a very pansy patch in memory it was, harking back to sunny Spain and the Castilian maid who had first taught me passion out of eyes that danced and deepened like amber Muscatel.

And this Paquita—more lovely even and apparently much more of a mental proposition! A bit of vivacious mockery in filmy red, a dash of it at her lips, heaven knows what not in her eyes, and dark hair that fluffed and tendriled waywardly in spite of every convention of combs. The outfit a single barouche rigged out in crimson poinsettias and drawn by a prancing Arab in red-covered harness. Well! Deliberately had she pelted me, too, that first time in passing—with a gay maliciousness even—and laughed as the bunch of roses hit me in the face. Now I waited her second coming—for up the street but a little way was the turning point of the parade—a huge

bunch of white snowballs clasped behind my back, in the other hand a note in a small envelope that I had scribbled hastily on the impulse of the moment.

"Positively I must know you," I had written. "Will be around to aid you dismount at the finish of the parade."

"Paquita!" enthused again—not at all in the manner of his age—the highly respectable-looking elderly citizen.

Yes, here she was!

"But who is Paquita?" I questioned, punching him in the ribs, as I watched the stately pirouette of the oncoming Arab.

His mind apparently, however, was in a beauty ramble too busy for words. "Paquita! Paquita!" he murmured in a dream of delight.

Paquita! I had said it too as, separating the snowy blossoms in my hand and stepping out from the crowd, I threw them in three well-aimed flings straight at the bonny head of her—and saw her eyes rest on the note that under cover of the act I had slipped on the seat beside her. Then I raised my hat and there was a delicate flush in her face. But already the restless, mince-footed Arab had pranced her away from us, and a Japanese maiden in a caravan of pepperwood and purple climbers was handing me a tiny basket of sweetmeats. Then I turned to repeat my question to my elderly neighbor, as I thought. But he was gone!

The parade was to break and gather for another illuminated celebration that night in a small field with a huge tent erected at the end of the Midway—a mushroom growth of small gamblers' stands, Hawaiian dancing girls, and the

like. Hither I hurried and waited. The last outfit came in, but Paquita's wasn't among them.

"Pardon me," I said, addressing the young lady with the Nevada dip to her voice, who with a companion had just stepped out of her yellow-poppied phaeton, "but where is the red barouche of poinsettias, black horse, single lady driver?"

Slowly she shook her head.

"Paquita's!" I sibilated, as if the word itself might bring remembrance. But it didn't.

"There were so many, so many in red," she said, reflecting. Then with a sudden return to the gay irresponsibility of the carnival—"How do you know she's single anyway?" she bantered.

"If I could only find her," I rejoined, hurrying on, "it wouldn't matter."

But Paquita wasn't to be found. Did she exist at all, or had I been dreaming?

Not till the illuminated parade that night did I again see her. Then, indeed, as a part of the scene might she well have been illusionment. Such glamors of lighting shading into night nuances! Star-flung skies, a ripple of wind in the moon-haunted foliage, music in the distance, and the joy surge of the crowd! But I was downcast and sad of heart. Two-thirds of the parade had passed and neither prancing Arab nor woman had appeared. In the moonlight something white had fallen at my feet. I stooped for it—a handkerchief—and glanced up. There she was now—illusionment or whatever!

"Paquita!" I enthused softly, gladly, just as the elderly gentleman had done that morning—for somehow it seemed the natural way of addressing her.

But her glance was wandering serenely to the other side of the crowd. The wood nymph in the previous outfit, after all, might have dropped that handkerchief. Then—just as the red barouche whirled away—I caught a look out of eyes—No, there was no wood nymph in the business—though

the one in it was evidently nymph enough—and well worth following.

With a few others, the barouche fell out at a cross street just a little below the Midway. A wide avenue of still moonlight it was and clicking palm leaves. First, with a hand to the bridle, I had to quiet the animal for her—inclined for the moment to be a little refractory. Then, beside the wheels, a mood on me, I bent low, my hand to my heart in ye courtly fashion of olde.

"To the real queen of the rose carnival," I said, "I bring her handkerchief with a request that I may keep it as her knight, to dream over its perfume and fight her battles forever after."

She dropped a bright little laugh. "Isn't this rather sudden, Sir Lancelot?" she asked mockingly.

"It has been to me," I answered.

"Dear me," she sighed, "and it is my last handkerchief!"

"The horse is restless," I said, springing into the vehicle beside her and snatching the lines from her hands. "Let us move on."

For an instant she peered up at me and gripped my wrists in protest.

"But where?" she asked with a hint of breathlessness. "Remember that I do not know you, Sir Lancelot. A maid is not her handkerchief to be put in a pocket without question. You might even be Don Quixote with absurd notions about fighting windmills."

To such belittling facetiousness, such a slur on my knighthood, could I pay no attention. "We are going," I said, "to whatever fate leads. Listen—the palms sing us on our way! It is moontime—the days of King Arthur's Round Table—and don't interrupt. Release your hold on my wrists, please, or shall I teach you that a maid's hands were made to be held before lines?"

"Stern one!" she sighed, sinking back in pretty resignation. Then peering around suddenly with a gay inquisitiveness—"Where have I seen you before, anyway? You must be the man in the moon."

"Back in another age," I rejoined, "I made love to you. It is that you re-

member. Such love as mine no one ever forgets."

"Indeed!" she breathed satirically.

"You were an Indian maiden then, and I son of the enemies of your tribe. But our love was great. We met secretly in places that the eyes of our peoples knew not, where their voices never spoke, and to which their ears were dumb. Your garments were buckskin; the moon was on your dusky hair. At our feet the waters surged out to the infinite wilderness. Yet neither of us cared. I stretched out a bare, brown arm, that was all, and drew you closer to me, murmuring the Indian word for 'Love!' You repeated my name over and over again—*Osh-lok-too!—Osh-lok-too!* Your lips were red, untamed berries; your eyes stars. It was all so sweet and so long ago."

"Indeed!" But this time it wasn't satirical, and was almost faint.

I looked around at her and she gave me an eerie little smile. "I do wish you would stick to the Round Table and being a knight," she said. "You almost made me believe that."

"Why not?" I suggested. "I am quite sure you are a little savage at heart."

"But I would not make love like that to any man"—with an obstructed endeavor to stamp her foot.

"It would be much nicer at any rate than counting their scalps."

She laughed. "I knew you were perfectly horrid the moment I saw you. That's the reason, I guess—I dropped my handkerchief."

"And it was because I thought milady so perfectly charming," I rejoined, "that I wrote the note. What an inconsistent pair of beings we are! I wonder if it's the direct result of a difference of sex or just the carnival?"

"Your horridness?" And she poised the question demurely between the fingers of rose-gloved hands. "Oh, I am sure it is the result of nothing but just yourself. I am hypnotized by it. Really, I couldn't tell you why I am here—I shouldn't be, of course. And someone must be looking for me back there even now." Again she leaned

forward impulsively and in a pretty flurry of anxiety as if to snatch the lines from my hands—but I laughed down the attack.

"Your 'shouldn't be' sounds so, of course," I pointed out, "that there's really no reason you shouldn't be. Then remember it is the time of King Arthur's Round Table and that we've gone back many, many years since we left the corner yonder, and that your lover back there has yet to be born. We've been together so long; indeed, it's a wonder you do not know me better than to think we could turn around till I felt like it myself."

"I know you're no knight," she retorted with true milady haughtiness. Yet the succeeding sparkle in her eyes made it but the toss of a chin.

"If it's a case of Beauty and the Beast, then," I supplemented, "there's nothing like being the whole thing. Now, I have hopes! Hasn't it become the fashion of your sex to love a Teddy bear?"

"Oh, the cute little dears!" she sighed unconsciously. Then with a quaint, bright vehemence suddenly caught me up. "There were no Teddy bears in King Arthur's time," she emphasized.

"But he's such a *dream*, isn't he?" I suggested satirically. "One has liberties, you know."

"If you hadn't you'd take them anyway, I imagine"—musing at me with a half stress of analysis. "Don't you really think we've gone far enough—or rather that you have?"

"'Morning waits at the end of the world, gipsy,'" I quoted; "'come away!' But perhaps we had better stop under this lamp post here and look each other over first. Would you also like to know who I am?"—as I pulled the Arab to a standstill under the glare of the light and faced her banteringly.

She cast me a glance of impudence. "Thank you, Mr. Marsden, but you see I already know."

For a moment I guess I must have looked my surprise, for she burst into a light plunge of airy laughter, surveying

me with a sort of mystical drooping of lashes over bright eyes.

"But I'm sure—I am sure I don't know you," I stammered. "We've never met before—I am certain of that."

"And I am quite as sure that I do not intend to tell you. You see I am not at all prominent, and do not look like my pictures—and my friends never think it worth while to tell their friends about me."

"Oh, that's how it happened, is it?" I guessed, somewhat relieved—for I had been thinking of one or two scrapes I had got into in my time. "Now, perhaps you will change your mind and tell me—so that I may be a better friend than my friends who are also yours, but *forgot* to tell me about you."

But she shook her head in a way there was no gainsaying. "And you cannot find out from your friends—or rather, your *friend*," she added decidedly—"because—well—no, I won't tell you that either."

"Then, as we stopped for the purpose, perhaps you *will* tell me what you are going to tell my friends about me." And I smiled down a challenge at the slim-cut loveliness of her, flower-like yet so tempered in its lines, and shining out of the radiant eyes, as it were, a bit of every temperament in all the world.

"My opinion of you! You are brave, very brave, Sir Lancelot," she satirized. "So brave—that I rather think—I like you for it. Indeed"—with a pause most chasm-like, then a sudden charming audacity—"I rather think I like you anyway."

"How nice—how truly nice," I enthused.

But she cut me short mercilessly. "There are some points about you, however, that might stand for improvement—much improvement! Under the circumstances perhaps I had better mention them—"

"Yes—"

"Your nose, for instance, isn't at all shapely like a man's nose ought to be—and if you lifted your hat I am quite certain you have a bald spot coming—"

"Oh, don't spoil it so!" I begged.

But evidently there was no stopping her.

"Your eyes are good, but they've looked on too many things they shouldn't have, I imagine—and your lips munched too much forbidden fruit. Your face is in some ways a sphinx—"

"Dear me, I hope you've finished," I sighed.

"Not quite. You're a very egotistical person, too—so egotistical that I am not sure you could love a woman well—well enough, for instance, to buy her all the new dresses she wanted—"

"What man ever did?" I blurted—so that she laughed. "Is a woman's love then but a love of dresses?"

"It wouldn't be so if a man's were not first. But to proceed; besides being egotistical, you're vain—and it is the vanity of a gipsy, for you carry your bohemianism that far. Life to you is a sort of circlet of beads of every color, and you play with them and count them over and smile and think they're precious stones—"

"That's because perhaps they were your beads which you gave me when you were an Indian maiden," I explained. "How could I help count them over and smile?—they are recollections of you!"

"Then, you're so fond of saying things you don't mean," she concluded, as if paying no attention, "that sometimes you really believe you do mean them. You're sadly, sadly promiscuous. Your coat of arms, Sir Knight, should bear a butterfly on wing and an eagle pinioned below."

"Why an eagle?" I asked.

"Oh, I admit a capacity in you to soar—but you are too much of a lover of the flowers near to earth."

"But the sweetest things I know of," I ventured, "grow nearest to earth—except, perhaps, very short women. You do see a little divine coloring in my glassware, then? That's hopeful! My beads may turn to opals yet, or a diamond necklace fit for a queen to wear."

She smiled and her eyes drooped a little as I glanced significantly at the bare, exquisite line of her slim neck.

"Were it not better," she demurred, "that they become praying beads instead?"

"It might not be hard," I ventured again, "if the divinity would consent."

She had sunk back in her seat with a sort of nestling look—yet vivid and different in her innate, elfish intensity, as some rare bird stayed for a moment in its wayward flight. "It's your turn now, isn't it?" she said, changing the subject. "I am not at all interested in what you think of me, but it was a bargain and I suppose you'll insist on it?"

"H'm—!" I began with a vengeance. "Oh, yes, one word will do, I guess"—letting my eyes linger for a moment on the madcap masses of golden brown hair and the piquant face beneath. "You're—you're simply inexpressible!"

She leaned forward to it, clapping her hands with a little gurgle of delight. "At last, Sir Lancelot, you have really said something knightly."

"That's not all!"

"But won't you spoil it?"—a real anxiety in her eyes. "Inexpressible, you know, is intellectual, temperamental—everything!"

"Part of your inexpressibleness," I went on, "lies in the fact that you think a great deal better of me than you said, and that you wouldn't like me to think you thought so."

"I am sure it isn't a nice part, then."

"Not a bit," I agreed. "It would be much nicer expressed. And you might also tell me who you are."

"But I prefer to be inexpressible and not a bit nice."

"Paquita!" I whispered, suddenly bending toward her.

For a moment she started visibly, staring at me in perplexity, and then she remembered.

"Oh, I know where you got the name, but that's all you have got. And that's all the other gentleman had—he heard it accidentally. I am a stranger here, too—that is, almost."

"What difference does it make after all," I commented easily, "since I've got the girl?"

Apparently it was a bad speech, for

she seemed suddenly to waken up to the fact once more. "Dear me," she sighed, half smiling and peering strangely about, "is it the moonlight's the hoo-doo—or just you? Don't you think perhaps we've been quite improper enough and long enough even for a rose carnival—will you take me back?"

"No, I won't—and I don't think you want to go."

She laughed and her arms went out in a little half-passionate gesture as if to embrace the scented night and all contained therein. It was as though something came to her with the action, too, something pulsating yet indefinable—for she drew the whip suddenly and flicked up the Arab.

"Around this corner here," she directed me zestfully. "We're going through the park—that is, if I may turn the trick and run away with you."

"Oh, please," I begged—and somehow our hands touched on the seat.

It was but a small place, the park, with many squat oak trees that cast funny, monstrous shadows, and we went through slowly and in silence, for the sudden mood was on both of us—making us gay withal yet seeming to require no speech.

"There," said I, as we were about to wind out in the street again, "is the bench on which I sat yesterday and thought of nothing—and shall probably sit tomorrow and think of you. Do you mind?"

"Oh, I suppose you have to think of something. You do haunt the park, then?"

"It serves as a sort of cool refreshment after the dizzier beverage that is the carnival."

"And after this," she added, turning around at me—as now out in another wide avenue at the outskirts of the town she again touched the Arab to a faster pace and I drew a tighter line accordingly.

"This is the elixir of life," I corrected gallantly, "and requires no soda water."

"And yet we are both intoxicated; I feel sure of it. Just now we shall awaken perhaps and find each other

spooks. Moon-mad, we are—Oh moon, I love you!"

Again had her arms gone out in that slight gesture and a tone of passion come to her voice. Watching her I was tempted almost to repeat the phrase with a different object—but I leaned toward her instead, pulling the animal again to a walk.

"Then, while I am still Sir Lancelot and you are the Queen," I responded, "while it is still the time of King Arthur's Court—I salute you in the manner of the age. Oh, but I will!"

And slowly did I master the white, ungloved hand she tried to keep from me, and put it to my lips—and I could see the blood mount to her face even in the shadows.

"Sir Lancelot," she warned, adopting my manner of speech and subduing her confusion, "you're a brave man, but beware the King. Beware the King, I say!" Then, as an afterthought apparently, "Will you do your Queen a mission?"

"To the end of the world and back," I averred earnestly.

"Oh, not that far. In yonder orchard"—and she pointed to the way-side—"in its farthest row of trees, grow cherries that are ripe and luscious to the taste. Bring me some, Sir Lancelot, bring me some."

She took the lines from me even as she spoke—and I was out of the barouche in a moment—thoughtless fool that I was—and with a knightly courtesy had set off on the errand.

"Many, many adventures!" she called after me gaily.

It was a large orchard and the farthest row of trees was a considerable distance away. I got the fruit, however, and returned—then stood there cursing myself in the moonlight for the idiot I had been.

Red barouche, lady and all were gone—not even a hoof-beat.

Slowly I took my way to the park and sat down on the bench I had pointed out. How long I remained there thinking I do not know, but I must have slept for a few moments. The moon suddenly appeared over a tree-

top smiling down at me. I arose—stretching out my arms to the lure of the night. "Paquita!" I breathed half passionately, "Paquita!" And yet the word was spoken more to something I had dreamt than lived—for that is how I felt about it.

Strangely enough it was in the moonlight here at the park and in this very place that I met her the second time. Haunted by an acute sense of incompleteness and unfortunate in my inquiries, I had lingered in the town till the last night of the carnival, hoping for such a meeting. Now, at the moment when I had practically given it up, it had come.

There were three of them—all in crimply white that shook in the moonlight. The two had paused to get a drink at the fountain and left her standing there alone. Then suddenly she turned and we stood staring at each other.

"Sir Lancelot!" she gasped, a faint color coming into her cheeks.

"Paquita!" I echoed softly.

Then in the silence which ensued we heard the other two scampering away—and a whimsical voice rang to us out of the shadows.

"Oh, Paquita, Paquita!" it called. "We leave you to your knight." Elfish laughter followed, shaken lightly to us like grains of gold in a sieve, then silence.

For an instant Paquita had looked worried—but her old zest came back to her.

"Dear me," she said, "so it is again the time of King Arthur and his court. In some strange way have I been dreaming of an age far on in which there were rose carnivals that came to an end—and girls that ran away. The cherries, Sir Knight, where are the cherries?"

"Gone with the red barouche," I replied, "and the girl who ran away."

"But I didn't get any—I didn't—"

"They are in your cheeks," I interposed lowly, approaching her and looking into the hazel eyes so brightly, meaningly lit. "They are in your

cheeks—and I have been dreaming of them ever since."

She laughed a little, drawing slightly away. "What a dreamer you are, Sir Knight!" she mocked. "I have not thought of you since."

"You have—you know you have," I corrected, with a direct glance. "Admit it—Paquita!"

She laughed again—this time with a fluttering, subdued note. "I mean—I have tried not to!"

"Because why?" I asked. "Because why, Paquita?" And I was near to her again.

"Because—because—" Then she lifted her eyes with a hint of recklessness. "Because of the King, I guess."

Suddenly I caught her hands. Was it just the madness of the carnival on me or what? "Paquita," I pleaded eagerly, "I want to be the King. I want you to be my Queen. You're the only kingdom I care for in all the world. I have been thinking of you, thinking of you, and I know I love you."

"But isn't it nicer being just Sir Lancelot?" she argued in a sort of breathlessness, endeavoring to draw away from me. "The Queen, you know, did not love the King. Then— isn't it— isn't it rather sudden? You do not even know me—you see—and—" For an instant she scanned my face anxiously, as with some desire of absolute analysis—then dropped her eyes.

"One does not love a name," I said, "but a woman. In that way I do know you. I know and remember your slightest gesture, the faintest shading of your glance, your lips—the unspoken things that look like wild-flowers out of your eyes. You're my dream and I want you always. Oh, Paquita, Paquita!"

She stood there trembling slightly, her eyes had melted to mine, her hands relaxed in my grasp. My madness had caught hers—and yet I knew it was a madness I would treasure always and held nothing back.

Then—before she could reply—the fountain with its statue suddenly let out a gush of gauzy laughter, two

white-robed figures reappeared as if by magic, and flouncing about pointed mischievous fingers at us.

In the unexpectedness of the sally my hands that held Paquita's had quit their hold. She stood for just an instant as if battling the pulsating atmosphere that had encompassed us; then, as it were, the alarm suddenly becoming real to her awakened sensitiveness, she picked her skirts around her and fled—with a bit of a laugh which I fancied afterward carried a tone of regret.

For a moment the other two continued to torment me—as I fell back on my bench in despair; then hurried away too with peals of merriment. It was five minutes later, perhaps, that I remembered I should have followed and swore at my negligence—at the moon riding so jauntily there on the ragged branch of an oak. Again Paquita was gone—and I did love her!

Some two weeks later it was, in the nearby city where I was located, that I became acquainted with Crisp. Never before had I been so taken with a man. Bohemian that I am, I make friends easily, any way—but in this case it was different. We were kindred spirits. Englishman he was—but such an Englishman!—high-bred and with a humor and zest that never permitted life to become blasé. Wanderer like myself, he had seen much of it, too, but was still young, smiling and ardent as ever. We met at a club one night over a bottle of real Parisian and afterward I saw him frequently. He lived in fashionable quarters in a quiet district—for they were more on romping than society, he stated, meaning himself and his wife—and he had asked me down on several occasions.

"Pon my soul, Marsden," he said one night in my quarters in the big hotel, "I want you to meet my wife. She would like you, I am sure. I've been telling her about you, too, and she's interested. She's a California girl, you know, and that's the reason I stick to this country so much."

I promised for the next week some-

time—then a notion took us and we went out for a stroll. We had been walking for about half an hour, probably, when he suddenly brought up.

"Talk of instinct!" he exclaimed. "There's no place it makes itself so apparent as in the feet. Here I am actually home"—with a sweep of the hand to the stone building of mission architecture at our side—"and I didn't do it intentionally either. Now that we are here, however, you had better come up. There's a new book in the library I want to show you—and some rare cigars. It's so late Mrs. Crisp will have retired, I guess, but I'll tell her in the morning what she missed. She's wearing herself out these days entertaining some visitors from the East."

There was no resisting him, so in I went, despite the fact that the time was so far gone. It seemed a perfect little heaven, that home of his—even at first glance. Never had I seen such furnishing—not rich, but quaint, and with that dainty, lingering touch which I often think bespeaks a woman's ideal capability.

"But you haven't seen my wife," he said, when I remarked upon it; "that accounts!"

I was to see her though, it seemed, and God!—I shall never forget! We had half smoked our cigars, and were discussing the book—when there was a brush of skirts just outside the *portières* in the hall. Crisp sat, his back turned, his legs slung out from him full length, and his eyes half dreaming as he paused to listen. I sat facing the door. The lights were heavily shaded—but I knew I saw distinctly.

"Oh, girlie!" he called. "Oh, girlie, are you dressed?"

Then for that instant a hand plucked the *portières* together and just above the triangle formed a piquant nose and a pair of lovely eyes looked down at us beneath ruffled hair—golden brown and curling! Meeting mine, they smiled in surprise and recognition. Paquita's—on my soul!

Crisp had half turned with a puff of smoke in her direction. "My wife,"

he said in a low tone. Then over his shoulder caressingly—"What, girlie, aren't you coming in?"

But the face had disappeared and only a laugh answered—a laugh that I remembered so well—and a soft thud of feet on the stairs.

For minutes—hours it seemed—I sat with him—puffing clouds of cigar smoke between us and endeavoring to control my emotions and the tones of my voice. Then I arose and took my departure—stumbling homeward like one in debauch.

Paquita! She was *his* wife—and I loved her!

It was somewhere about the middle of August and I was back in the town of flowers and rose carnivals. There was no carnival, of course, and really no reason I should be there—except, well, in the park the bench I had sat on still stood in the same place, the waters of the fountain glibbed as sentimentally in the night quiet, and the moon as of yore wreathed itself in folds of debutant white and glided dangerously on the dark edges of listless, drooping trees. In the book of memories there are always a few flowers to which one likes to turn a last time, while the perfume still lingers in all its delicate suggestion, before closing upon them again and forever. Then I was leaving the South—perhaps for always. There is no bitterness in either of these statements, for by this time I had got over that. The frog in the fountain pool—however he got there—was even a half gay fellow tonight—though he did set one thinking backward.

Crisp—happy Crisp—damn him! I had moved to another hotel and kept out of his way ever since that night at his house. A couple of notes I received from him, forwarded through the general postoffice, but I made no response. Half a dozen times casually had I seen him, too, but managed to escape his notice. On these occasions—except for once—he was with a strange woman, a handsome brunette—and I wondered much who she was, my blood boiling not a little at the thought that came

to me. Heavens! What did a man with a wife like his want to do any skylarking for? Even if she was one of the visitors—of whom he had spoken—a thing that I was in no mood to believe—he was paying her far too much attention. Yet it was just like Crisp, gay, careless dog that he was! There were times when I hated him intensely—even as I loved his wife. Ah, Paquita! How the name stirred the highest tides of being—to ebb away in regret inevitable. There were times, too, when I gloried in that seeming chasm between Crisp and her—he with his brunette beauty, she who had permitted me to make love to her in the most passionate terms. Surely it was the very best indication of natural right. Yet to widen that chasm between the woman and the man who had been my friend I could not nor would not put out a single finger. That had been decided. So, before, had I decided many things—that had not been Paquita! Other women had smiled—as women will—and I had smiled back—as men will, too—and had gone on my way, and there had been an end to it. Somewhere, sometime, there would be an end to this.

The frog in the fountain pool was even an heroic little fellow—croaking from his infinitel oneliness so pleasantly, so self-denyingly, in the face of life and its stupendous temptations. Yes, and somewhere, sometime, might he actually become again a merry, swashbuckler of a fellow—taking the world for his own because fate had refused him the most particular part of it.

The trees heaved a sigh. How long had I been sitting there dreaming, any-

way? Wasn't I dreaming even now? The moon had been dripping silver on the sprayed waters of the fountain. Some metallic image at the top caught the light and reflected it Jacob's-ladder-like at a point directly before me. When I opened my eyes again a woman stood there—a woman in filmy, shimmering white. The breeze stirred suddenly and she seemed to tremble like a leaf—a swaying motion that brought her toward me! Her eyes were a radiance that sought out my soul. It was only a dream, of course—but I rose to my feet. "Paquita!" I whispered yearningly, "Paquita!" I put out a hand and it touched flesh and blood.

"Oh, Sir Lancelot," echoed a voice, delicious in its tenderness, "have you come back here to dream—too?"

I drew her down on the bench beside me. "Have you?" I asked passionately. "Have you?"

She nodded her head—and I noticed there was a shining moisture in her eyes.

She was Crisp's wife, but what did I care now! Wasn't she mine by her own words, by the right of the nature that breathed around us?

"Oh, Paquita, Paquita!" I murmured; "I love you, I love you! As in the time of King Arthur, I am Sir Lancelot and you are *my* Queen. But shall we not fly to the ends of the earth, dearest, for the love we bear each other?"

She resigned herself to me with a little sigh.

"But why did you never come back to Crisp's?" she asked a moment later. "I was a guest there for three weeks. I thought you didn't care."

"YES, she has reached the heights," said one Christian Scientist, speaking of another. "Now, when she wishes to take a bath, she simply becomes plunged in thought."

KATY DID

By RACHEL CROTHERS

CHARACTERS

WILLIAM WENDELL (a lawyer)

STOKES (his secretary)

KATY NORSE (a client)

MR. PHILIPS (a visitor)

PLACE: William Wendell's private law office, in New York City.

TIME: The present. Ten o'clock on a spring morning.

AT CURTAIN—WILLIAM WENDELL enters from left. He is forty, good-looking and well dressed; strong, keen, shrewd, successful. He enters quickly and goes directly to desk, sitting at right in the revolving chair, his back to the windows at right and facing the door at left. He begins opening his mail at once. There is a low knock at the door.

WENDELL (sharply)

Come. (STOKES enters cautiously. He is WENDELL's secretary: a blond young man, mild and polite, who holds his head at one side when he walks.)

STOKES

Good morning, Mr. Wendell.

WENDELL (not looking up)

Morning, Stokes.

STOKES (carefully laying three letters on the desk. WENDELL puts them quickly with the large pile he has already begun to open.)

A lady has been waiting some time to see you, sir.

WENDELL (reading)

What?

STOKES

A lady. She's been here since a little before nine.

WENDELL

Who is she? What does she want?

STOKES

She won't give her name, but she says it's very urgent and she must see you.

January, 1909—9

WENDELL

Nonsense! Tell her I don't see anyone without an appointment.

STOKES

Very well, sir.

(Exit STOKES. WENDELL goes on opening letters for a moment. STOKES enters again.)

STOKES (entering timidly as he knocks) I beg your pardon, Mr. Wendell. This lady is very unusual.

WENDELL

What's the matter? What lady?

STOKES

The same one. She says it's life or death. She wanted to come in here to wait, before you came, but I was very firm.

WENDELL (with the suspicion of a smile)

Yes, I suppose so. Why the devil don't you get rid of her? Or make an appointment? Isn't someone else waiting now?

STOKES

Yes, sir, Mr. Philips. He seems to be in a hurry, too.

WENDELL

Tell him I'll see him in ten minutes.

STOKES

Very well, sir.

(STOKES has left the door slightly open, and as he turns to go out now, KATY NORSE enters. She is a very pretty and smartly dressed woman of thirty-five. She enters with an assurance of being well received, smiles at STOKES and steps aside for him to pass. WENDELL rises, surprised. STOKES looks helplessly from one to the other.)

KATY (brightly to STOKES)

It isn't your fault. (To WENDELL.) He really kept me out like a lion, but I couldn't resist the open door. (To STOKES.) I'm not afraid now, thank you. You may go.

(She forces STOKES to go, then closes the door and turns quickly to WENDELL.)

He didn't make you understand. I had to come in. It's desperate. I'm only in town for a few hours, and I'm taking awful risks in coming here. But I had to come. I must talk to you. I know I'm intruding. I know you're angry, but you won't be when I tell you. It's so big and so important, and so awful. I've heard so much of you. I know if anyone can handle this—this—affair—this case—if anyone is big enough and clever enough to grapple with it—you are.

(She puts her hand up to her head suddenly.)

Oh, I beg your pardon! It's—it's the—the excitement. It was so hard to come. I was so afraid to come.

(She seems a little faint; and he, puzzled but interested in spite of himself, pushes a chair forward courteously.)

WENDELL

Won't you sit down?

KATY (sitting)

Thank you.

WENDELL (after a moment)

What can I do for you?

KATY

Oh, so much—so much! I must talk rapidly; there's such a little time. You're so good to let me come in.

(WENDELL turns away with a half-amused and very sarcastic expression on his face. KATY, taking her hand

away from her eyes, looks up at him keenly, then quickly at his desk; then innocently puts her hand to her head again, as he turns back to her.)

WENDELL (sitting at his desk)

Now if you'll tell me, please, just what—

KATY (leaning forward eagerly)

Yes, yes, I shall try. But first—and this is the most important part—this is really what I want to ask you before I can go on. I want to know how secret it can be kept.

WENDELL

Secret? You mean your case?

KATY

The case—yes.

WENDELL

The confidence of a client is always—

KATY

Yes, I know. But this must be more than secret. It's all so strange—so mysterious—so unlike anything that ever happened before or ever will happen again.

WENDELL

If you don't trust me, madam, of course I can't—

KATY

No, no, no—it isn't that.

WENDELL

Then you'll pardon me if I hurry you a little.

KATY

Yes, of course; but it's so hard to begin. What shall I say first?

WENDELL

That depends largely upon what you have to say.

KATY

Yes, I suppose it does. I can't think fast enough. Now—if I could stay here and think, just a few minutes—I'm sure I could speak quite clearly. Couldn't you see someone else—a—a—first? Don't let me take too much of your time. I don't want to impose upon your generosity.

WENDELL (rising hesitatingly)

Well, I— (He sits again.) That isn't necessary. If you'll be kind enough to give me the nature of the case.

KATY

Yes, of course I shall. But tell me, first, will it be possible for you to go on

and win the case without disclosing my name, or ever letting anyone know I came here?

WENDELL

That depends. I'm speaking totally in the dark. Are you the defendant? Is it your case?

KATY

I—I—can't quite tell. That's—that's the point. You see, it's all so mysterious.

WENDELL (*drily*)

Yes, it seems to be. Is it a divorce case?

KATY

Oh, no! You don't think I'd have anything to do with a divorce case, do you?

WENDELL

I hope not. Does the light trouble your eyes?

KATY

Yes, it does a little. My eyes aren't very strong. (*She has been putting her hand to her eyes conspicuously.*)

WENDELL (*rising*)

Won't you sit here? It will be better with your back to the light.

KATY

Oh, thank you so much! (*As she rises she drops her purse, and WENDELL picks it up for her.*) Oh, thank you so much! (*She takes the purse slowly, and smiles at him.*) You do inspire confidence, don't you?

WENDELL

Because I return your purse?

KATY

I sha'n't tell why. (*Sitting in his chair.*) Oh, this is much better. Pardon me, what an interesting paper-knife! You must have got that in—(*She reaches for the knife and knocks the pile of unopened letters off the desk.*)

Don't trouble. I have them.

(*She picks the letters up, looking at one especially, and puts them back on the desk innocently.*)

WENDELL

Well—as you were saying—

KATY

Yes, as I was saying. Now, just what was I saying?

WENDELL

I don't think you had said anything,

Miss—Miss— (*There is a knock.*) Yes, come.

STOKES (*entering*)

Pardon me, Mr. Wendell. (*He crosses and gives WENDELL a folded piece of notepaper.*)

WENDELL (*bowing to KATY as he opens the paper*)

Will you excuse me?

KATY

Most certainly. Don't let me—

(*WENDELL reads the paper, and KATY looks cautiously at letters on desk.*)

WENDELL

Pardon me, one moment.

KATY

Oh, don't hurry, I beg.

(*STOKES has gone out at once. WENDELL now starts to the door. KATY leans toward the desk, then becomes conscious that WENDELL has stopped, and leans back in her chair. WENDELL shows that something has just occurred to him, and goes on to the door, stopping with his back half turned to KATY.*)

WENDELL (*opening the door*)

Stokes. One moment.

(*STOKES comes to the door.*)

(*KATY watches in suspense, putting her hand out several times to touch the letters on the desk, but drawing it back without the courage to take the letter she wants.*) WENDELL (*watching KATY out of the corner of his eye as he speaks to STOKES*)

Get me Volume three of Stone's International Law.

STOKES

Very well, sir.

WENDELL (*aside to STOKES*)

Don't let her leave this room, and keep your eye on her.

(*Exit WENDELL. STOKES goes to book shelves at back. KATY puts her hand out toward the desk several times, but STOKES turns toward her repeatedly.*)

KATY

Can't you find the book?

STOKES

I—I—it— There are so many.

KATY (*rising*)

Let me help you.

STOKES

Oh, no—no, don't trouble, madam.

KATY

Stone's International Law. (*Run-*

ning her fingers over the books.) Stone's—Stone's—Stone's Inter—why, here it is. Volume one, Volume two. Mr. Wendell said Volume three, didn't he?

STOKES (*nervously*)

I believe he did.

KATY

Volume one—Volume two—there only seem to be two. Look farther down. Look over there.

(STOKES turns away, and KATY starts to desk, but STOKES turns again and goes back with her.)

KATY (*putting her hand up to her head*)

I wonder if I could have a glass of water. I feel a little— May I trouble you?

STOKES

Certainly I—I—I— Certainly a—I'm afraid—

KATY (*putting her hand on the desk to steady herself*)

Oh!

STOKES

Oh, my dear madam—I—

KATY

A little water, please.

(STOKES starts frantically to the door. KATY at the left of desk leans quickly over it. STOKES turns and comes back. KATY grows faint again.)

STOKES

I beg your pardon, madam. Is there anything I can do for you?

KATY

I said water, my good man, water. Can't you understand?

STOKES

I'm very sorry—but we don't have water. We don't keep it.

KATY

Then open the window, do—for a little air.

STOKES

Certainly. (*He goes to window right of desk to open it. KATY reaches over the desk, when WENDELL opens the door. KATY puts her hand to her hat and struggles with a hatpin.*)

WENDELL

That's all, Stokes; thank you. (STOKES exits without opening window, and WENDELL goes to desk.)

I'm going to ask you to excuse me five minutes more. A very interesting case has just been brought to me. I'm somewhat of a detective as well as a lawyer.

KATY

Really?

WENDELL

I'll just send a telegram, and then I'm entirely at your service.

KATY

You're very good.

(WENDELL stands at right of his desk and takes telegram blank. KATY stands at left, watching him. He is about to write, but suddenly looks at her.)

KATY (*starting*)

I beg your pardon. (*Turning away.*) I've just been looking at your books. I'll go on hunting the third volume if you don't mind.

WENDELL

Oh, thank you very much. I should like to have it.

(As soon as she turns away, he takes up all the unopened letters, counts them and puts them together on the desk, locking up those he has opened, and starts across the room without the telegram.)

KATY

Oh, then, you didn't write the telegram?

WENDELL

What?— No; on second thought I'll have someone else do that.

KATY (*coming down to meet him*)

Don't you think I'd make a good detective, too?

WENDELL

I don't know? Do you think you would?

KATY

W-e-ll, I don't think I'm easily fooled.

WENDELL

I don't think I am, either.

KATY

You're a lawyer. You've been trained to it.

WENDELL

And you?

KATY

I'm a woman.

(They are standing rather close to-

gether, each watching the other keenly, each suspiciously alert and at the same time strongly attracted by the other.)

WENDELL

Which you think is greater than training?

KATY

Well, if we were both trying to fool the other, I think I'd bet on—

WENDELL

Which?

KATY (*with a little laugh*)

I won't tell.

WENDELL (*moving closer to her*)

You're sure you haven't anything to tell me? Anything you regret?

KATY (*surprised at the sudden kindness in his voice*)

No, nothing. I can't change what I came for.

WENDELL

And that is?

KATY

Haven't I told you?

WENDELL

Have you?

KATY

Oh, the time! It's flying. You won't be too long, will you?

WENDELL

No, not—too long.

(*He goes out. KATY with tense excitement watches the door, then rushes to the desk. She takes the pack of letters, snatches one out and manages to put the others back into shape, in spite of her violently trembling hands, hurries back to the book shelves, and takes out a book. WENDELL opens the door, looking about in surprise before he sees KATY.*)

KATY (*smiling sweetly over her open book*)

Did you think I had flown out the window?

WENDELL

What are you reading?

(*He still has his hand on the knob of the door, and slips the catch to lock it so that the audience sees what he does.*)

KATY

Penalties for theft.

WENDELL

Does that interest you?

KATY

Very much indeed.

WENDELL

Do you think the penalties are too severe?

KATY

On the contrary, I think they are very mild. The two greatest aren't mentioned at all.

WENDELL

What are they?

KATY

The agony of mind if one *does* do it—

WENDELL

Yes?

KATY

And the still greater agony—if one doesn't.

WENDELL

I don't see that.

KATY

Don't you? I must go now. It's dangerously near my train time. I'll write and make another appointment. I shall have to take a cab and fly. I want to thank you for your very great kindness and patience. I know now that I could not put my case in better hands, and that *no one* could fool you, or get ahead of you. I'll say good-bye for the *present*. Thank you again.

WENDELL

Just a moment. I want to ask one more question about your case.

(*He goes to the desk, takes the letters, counts them to himself and puts them down. KATY involuntarily raises her hand to the doorknob, but controls herself.*)

WENDELL

Won't you sit down? It's just one question.

KATY

I'll stand, thank you. I must ask you to hurry.

WENDELL (*going toward her*)

I ask it as a man—not as lawyer. If I knew that a woman had done something wrong, and I had an opportunity to save her, before the law touched her, do you think I ought to do it? I know she's a good woman. I've looked into her eyes; I've heard her speak.

KATY

Oh, you mean you're in love with her?

WENDELL

I could be.

KATY

Same thing. Then you're not capable of judging whether she's good or bad. If you *know* that she's done one wrong thing you better let the law do the rest. I don't think she'd be very much afraid of *you*.

WENDELL

Now, put yourself in her place. Suppose you are dependent upon a miserly old uncle who doesn't give you enough to live on; and suppose you have contracted a debt which you can't possibly pay; and suppose the shop has put the bill in my hands to collect; and suppose I threatened to sue you if you didn't pay; and suppose, in desperation, you raise a cheque, which your uncle gives you—from fifty dollars to one hundred and fifty; and that yesterday you mailed the cheque to me, and afterward, terrified at what you had done, confessed to your uncle. Then suppose the uncle comes to me this morning to get the cheque back, and tells me the whole story; and suppose the uncle is outside now—waiting; *but* suppose you came *yourself*—*early*—meaning to confess to me, too; and then suppose I set a trap for you to steal the letter, and you *do*.

(WENDELL has said all this quietly, but tensely watching her face. She listens innocently until he says "steal" when she closes her eyes, and WENDELL goes on eagerly.)

Then suppose I give you a chance to save yourself. I know how hard it might be—for a girl, and I could forgive her and protect her.

KATY (taking a deep breath)

It sounds like a fairy tale. But she'll never come. She'd never have the nerve to go to a man's office and steal the letter right under his nose. But I know what you'll do.

WENDELL

What?

KATY

You'll tear the cheque in two and

send it back to her. And now I *must* go.

WENDELL (going close to her)

Let me do it now, then.

KATY

Oh, then you have the cheque?

WENDELL

No, but I know where it is.

KATY

Then why don't you do it?

WENDELL

I want her to give it to me.

KATY

Oh, you really hope she *will* come?

WENDELL

She has come.

KATY

No! Really, she's very daring.

WENDELL

She certainly is.

KATY

Then don't let me keep you. (*Turning to the door.*) And—and let me say something—for her sake. Be—be very kind to her. Remember why she did it. Sometimes a girl wants pretty things so much that she can't resist. If it's her first wrong—be very—kind to her.

(*She turns the knob. The door doesn't open. She tries it again, then looks at WENDELL.*)

KATY

May I trouble you?

WENDELL

I'm *trying* to be kind to her.

KATY (haughtily)

I don't understand. Will you be kind enough to open the door?

WENDELL

Don't make it any harder for yourself. Give me the letter.

KATY

What do you mean? I *demand* that you open this door.

WENDELL

At once—when you give me the letter.

KATY

What are you talking about? Open this door or I'll scream.

WENDELL

You force me to do this. There were thirteen unopened letters on my desk when I left the room the last time.

There were twelve when I returned.
Where is the other letter?

KATY

How dare you? What do you mean?

WENDELL

I mean that you took that letter. I mean that you are the girl who raised the cheque. You said we were both clever. Have I won?

KATY

You've won my contempt. I know nothing, absolutely nothing about the cheque. Open the door at once.

WENDELL

I'll open it to call your uncle, if you like. He doesn't know you're here. I've been trying to spare you that ordeal. He's there—waiting.

(WENDELL crosses her and unlocks the door.)

KATY

Wait! (*He turns toward her.*) What are you going to do? (*She is breathing heavily and seems almost ready to drop. There is a long pause.*)

WENDELL

To call your uncle.

KATY

I haven't any uncle, and I swear to you I know nothing about the cheque. Now call whomever you please.

(WENDELL looks at her hesitatingly, then throws the door open.)

WENDELL

Stokes, tell Mr. Philips his niece is here, and ask him to come in.

(WENDELL and KATY wait, neither looking at the other. Rapid steps are heard and Mr. PHILIPS comes through the door. He is a white-haired man of about sixty-five. He wears an imperial and mustache, nose-glasses, carries a high hat and walking-stick. PHILIPS looks from KATY to WENDELL in surprise.)

PHILIPS (*after a pause*)

I beg your pardon. I thought you sent for me. I thought my niece was here.

WENDELL (*amazed, speaks slowly*)

I—beg your pardon— You—I—I— Then this—

PHILIPS (*bowing himself out*)

I thought my niece was here. I beg your pardon.

WENDELL

Yes—a—a—I beg your pardon. Stokes called the wrong man. If you'll just wait a moment longer, Mr. Philips. I'm sorry.

(*The men continue to bow ceremoniously to each other as PHILIPS backs out of the room.*)

KATY

Well? You said we both were clever. Have I won?

WENDELL

You've won my abject apologies. I— How can I explain?

KATY

It's always possible to be mistaken. Good morning. (*She crosses him, going to the door.*)

WENDELL

Just one more moment, please. Let me thank you for having restored my faith in humanity. I knew when I looked into your eyes that they were those of an honest woman, one incapable of the slightest deceit, or duplicity. I sincerely beg your pardon for having submitted you to this annoyance. Believe me, anything I can do for you to help win your case, I shall gladly do. When I do find this cheque—believe me, I shall do what you ask—I shall be kind—for your sake.

(KATY turns slowly to the door, her head down.)

KATY (*softly*)

Good-bye.

WENDELL

Au revoir.

KATY (*very quietly, her back to him*)

I did steal the letter.

WENDELL

What!

KATY (*turning toward him, and drawing the letter from her sleeve*)

But first, before I give it to you—will you promise not to open it? There is nothing in it you want to see—but something which somebody doesn't want you to see. Do you believe me now?

(*She goes close to him and he looks deeply into her eyes.*)

WENDELL

I believe you.

KATY

Here is the letter.

(She holds it up to him. He starts.)

WENDELL

That one?

(He half raises his hand for it.

KATY retains the letter, and his hand falls.)

KATY

I am asking you to believe a great deal. Yes, it's Rose's letter, but it isn't for you. She put the wrong letter in the wrong envelope as they do in story books. When, a little later, she realized her mistake she was so frantic with grief and alarm that I determined to risk it and get it back, if possible.

WENDELL *(after a pause)*

Won't you sit down?

(He places a chair for her at center. She sits and he leans back upon his desk, looking down at her.)

KATY

I'm her cousin, Katy Norse. You've heard of me. *(WENDELL almost speaks as he recognizes the name.)* I'm sort of a mother—and guardian—and everything else, you know—to Rose.

WENDELL

Yes, I know all about you.

KATY

We're only in town for the day, and she didn't want you to know it. This letter is to—another man. I never have approved of her engagement to you, for I knew she didn't love you. So I haven't stopped this other affair as I suppose I should have done. She really cares for him—*really* cares, and he doesn't know about—you. It's so seldom that two people do care—as they do—that I can't bear to have them miss each other. She's given him her sweetest, tenderest self, which a girl only gives—once.

WENDELL

Will you tell her that I give her up—to the other—man? And that I'm very glad she does love someone—like

that? Our engagement was—because of her father—you know.

KATY

I know.

WENDELL

I suppose that kind of love always comes once in a woman's life. Thank God, it didn't come too late to her.

KATY

I'm ashamed. It seems so silly now not to have come to you at once with the truth. I thought you were cold and severe. If I had known how generous—and—very—very—kind you are—I— *(She stops and he looks at her until he forces her to raise her eyes. She rises quickly.)*

And now I must go. Don't you think I've missed about ten trains? There isn't any train, and there isn't any lawsuit. It was all a lie—an excuse to get here. Good-bye.

(She puts out her hand and he takes it, and keeps it, walking to the door with her.)

WENDELL

Where are you going to lunch—if I'm not impertinent?

KATY *(drawing away her hand)*

I don't know. I must telephone to Rose first and put her out of her suspense.

WENDELL

Tell her it's all right. That you have the letter, and that—

KATY

And that what?

WENDELL

And that you're lunching at Sherry's—at one.

KATY *(laughing)*

We both thought we were clever, didn't we? But it seems to me we were both very stupid. Who, do you think, won?

WENDELL *(taking her hand again)*

Katy did.

KATY

Katy didn't!

WENDELL

Katy *did*.

QUICK CURTAIN

"CHEER up, old man; every cloud has a silver lining, you know."
"Yes; but 'tisn't every chap has an airship."

THE DAWN OF MIRAMA'S DAY

A Tale of the South Seas

By RALPH STOCK

AT four o'clock in the afternoon Carter flung a towel over his shoulder, whistled a mongrel terrier from fly-catching operations on the veranda mats, and strolled listlessly down the winding paths of the plantation toward the sea.

Every now and then he stopped to examine a promising rubber plant or to release a banana bud from the choking embrace of a creeping vine. Things were promising, highly promising, but it was far too hot to be enthusiastic about it. The sky was a flaming sheet of copper, merging into a dull pewter as it neared the horizon, and the sun streamed down with a merciless persistency that scorched everything it touched, from the mahogany colored skin of Carter's face to the good red earth about the banana and pineapple plants.

Down on the beach there was no relief. The Pacific was a blue mirror that reflected and intensified the sun's rays into a blinding glare.

Carter's undressing was a study in economy of exertion. Then he wallowed out to the reef and wallowed back again, to sit under a palm with the mongrel and a pipe. He had done all this three hundred and sixty-five times during the last year, and the year before that, except for a two months' bout with fever, and there were still two more years of it. He smiled as his thoughts traveled back to the early days on the island; the stretch of glistening coral sand, the feathery-topped cocoanut palms, the intense

blue of the ocean,—all these had appeared beautiful to him then. Beautiful! The place was a blot on the face of nature; a sun-scorched desolation unfit for human habitation!

He dressed slowly and stood straining his eyes out over the glare of the water, for it was something even to be looking in the direction of cool rains and the other things worth having.

"Two more years," he muttered. "My God! I'm sick of it—sick of it!" Then he squared his shoulders and retraced his steps toward the bungalow.

At the crossing in the mangrove swamp he came upon Mirama, sitting on an empty fruit crate, dexterously molding a cigarette of dried banana leaf and native tobacco. A good girl was Mirama—as island girls went. She helped old Rarago in the kitchen, and wove sleeping-mats as fine as a panama hat, while her brother worked among the bananas.

Carter had never been sure how far her nursing had gone toward saving his life during the fever, and there was the little matter of the shark inside the reef. That Mirama had happened to be on the beach at the time was, of course, purely accident, but the way in which she had paddled out and hauled him into the canoe like a drowning puppy was a lasting memory to Carter. For these things she had become an acquisition, and even her brother's laziness among the bananas was tolerated on her account.

She was such a lonely, demure little soul, too, with none of the airs and

graces of an island belle. With her trim white sula and necklaces of seed, her jet-black hair glistening with coconut oil and tumbling about her shoulders in wild profusion, her splendid carriage of body and head, she went about her work, singing and smiling and quite unspoiled.

Carter mopped the lining of his helmet and found it hard to be angry with her, though two months' precious mail lay on the fruit crate at her side undelivered—while she rolled a cigarette. Even now she set light to the tobacco before handing him the letters with a smile that disarmed criticism and sent thin ribbons of smoke creeping up over her face to hang in the stagnant air above her head.

"You should have brought these to me at once, Mirama," said Carter, selecting a blue foreign envelope from the pile and tearing it hastily open. "Letters always before anything—anything—" His voice trailed away into silence as his eyes devoured the contents of the envelope, and Mirama knew that it was no use trying to tell him anything just then, much less that, after mature deliberation in the mangrove swamp, she had decided not to deliver even letters to an undressed white man on the beach. So she sat on her fruit crate in silence and watched the changing expressions of Carter's face.

They were wonderful, these little square bags of crisp paper with their closely traced lines of thin, black patterns. They looked so harmless, yet sometimes, after studying them for a long time, she had seen Missi Carto frown and swear and smile, and go away down to the beach and sit with his head between his hands for an hour on end, gazing out to sea. Mirama felt particularly proud at having captured one for herself, and felt in the folds of her sula to make sure it was still there. It was the same color as the one Missi Carto was now looking at, so it was hardly likely that he would need two exactly the same. She would take it to old Rarago, who understood these things, and together they would frown and swear and smile, too.

She watched Carter's retreating figure until it was hidden by a bend in the path, then jumped down from the fruit crate and picked up a tiny square of white paper. It was a picture such as she had never seen before. It had no bright colors like the prints hanging on the walls of the chief's house in her native village, and it was small, but the woman's face that looked out from the paper was very beautiful—far more beautiful than the missionary's wife, or even the barmaid with the golden hair that she had once seen in Levuka; indeed, she was so beautiful with her round, white throat and laughing eyes that Mirama took the picture into the swamp and tore it into tiny fragments with her teeth, and trod them savagely into the mud.

Yet that evening she was singing as she dried the supper things.

"Rarago," she said suddenly, "I need your help."

Old Rarago regarded her uncertainly through a cloud of dishwater steam.

"It is a strange thing that I wish you to do," she went on, rubbing hard at a teacup, "but you will do it, Rarago, for me—because I know many things."

The old man shuffled a pair of horny feet on the matting of the floor and angled vigorously for a teaspoon.

"You are wise, Rarago," continued Mirama, smiling sweetly; "you can make words of the black patterns traced on paper, while I—I only know of the cigars and the whisky and the other things that were once Missi Carto's and are now yours; and because I know this, you will make words for me so that we may frown and swear and smile over them together."

Rarago's wrinkled smile was a mingling of relief and amusement.

"Draw the black patterns," he suggested amiably, "and I will make many words of them for you."

Then Mirama produced the letter from her sula, and old Rarago shook his head, and stamped his feet very hard, and told her to return it to Missi Carto at once. This she expressed her entire willingness to do if the cigars and the

whisky and the "other things" were returned also, a stipulation that had a wonderfully quieting effect on Rarago. And so it came about that he took the paper bag and held it over the steam of the kettle until it opened of its own accord, while Mirama marveled and told herself again that there was surely no one quite so clever as old Rarago.

Then they went over to the house of Mirama's mother and lit a candle nut, and the old man deciphered the letter for his own amusement, for he saw no reason in telling the girl its contents; a tale about the great red and white city he had once visited would interest her far more than a letter such as this. It began:

MY DEAR OLD BOY:

It's no good explaining, or saying all the ordinary things. I've treated you abominably and there is no excuse. Somehow out there you seemed so very far away, and there were two more years of Hugh's persistency to put up with, and I just wasn't strong enough, that's all. By the time this reaches you I shall be married; and I can only ask you to forgive and forget! . . .

Rarago looked very mysterious, and scratched the back of his head perplexedly, for he was fully conscious that Mirama's eyes were searching for his across the candle light.

"What does it mean?" she demanded eagerly.

He looked up at her and an understanding smile lurked in the lines about his mouth.

"It means," he said slowly, "that your day is very near, Mirama. There is nothing more to tell you, for that is all that matters—to you. Take this paper bag, stick down the flap as it was before, and smear it with a little mud, then put red hibiscus blossoms in your hair and give it to Missi Carto, telling him you found it in the mangrove swamp. And then—your day will be very near."

And that was all Mirama could get him to say, but she was content, for it was clear that old Rarago knew all things.

At midnight Carter came out on

the veranda in search of a breeze, though he knew there was none to be found. There was something ominous in the utter stillness of sea and sky and air—not a ripple, not a cloud, not a breath. A hot giant hand seemed to have descended on the earth to smother it in its sleep. But presently a faint breeze, warm and soft as velvet, crept up from the ocean and set the broad leaves of the banana plants aquiver in the moonlight; the silver sheet of sea was broken into tiny ripples, and a broad, black bank of cloud appeared on the horizon.

Carter watched its coming with a sigh of relief, and leaned farther out over the balustrade to catch the blessed motion of air. The breeze stiffened, and presently the cocoanut palms began to sway and whisper, and the boom of the surf, awakened from a long sleep, sounded out at the reef. Still the bank of cloud crept on toward the moon, and the crisp patter of rain sounded on the dry earth.

Suddenly old Rarago appeared round the bungalow wall and pointed toward the sky, but Carter only heard his name uttered before the moon was blotted out and the hurricane burst upon them. The corrugated iron roof of the veranda was carried away in the first gust, and Carter listened to it rattling away into the darkness like ineffectual stage thunder. He seized Rarago by the arm, and together they clung to the balustrade, seeing nothing, but hearing strange sounds that came indistinctly through the roar of wind and rain—the barking of dogs, the crack of splitting timber, the crash of glass as gravel hurtled through the bungalow windows.

Something flew out of the night and hit Carter on the forehead; he put up his hand and brought it away wet, yet still he clung to the balustrade and strained his eyes into the darkness. The possibilities that lay behind the black veil of the storm at once appalled and fascinated him. It was maddening to hear so many things, yet to know nothing and do nothing. Inaction was the hell of it.

He groped his way along the veranda and down the steps to the gravel path. Would the rubber stand the strain? At least he could feel. The wind made it impossible to stand, so he dropped to his knees and crawled on through pools of water, over stones and tangled brushwood, toward the plantation.

A palm crashed down out of the darkness ahead of him; another fell behind, and the snapping of a third sounded above the shrieking wind like the report of a rifle—directly overhead. On the instant Carter felt himself seized and dragged backward, and the tree trunk crashed to earth where he had just been kneeling; soft hair blew across his face, and he turned to find Mirama at his side.

With the gray of the dawn he went down to the beach and sat gazing out to sea, trying to think.

The plantation was a chaos of tangled foliage beaten into mud; even the cocoanut grove was level with the ground. For some reason—or was it for no reason?—the work of three years had been obliterated in a night,

wiped from the face of the earth like a drawing from a slate, and he stood where he had begun. He smiled as he remembered that yesterday the thought of two more years had sickened him; today there were five.

It was then that Mirama came out on the beach and handed him a blue foreign envelope smeared with mud. There were red hibiscus blossoms behind her ears, and the wind blew her hair about her face as she squatted in the sand at his feet; but Carter failed to notice these things, and he seemed not to be listening while she told him how she had found the letter in the mangrove swamp.

His eyes had hardly traversed the first line of the note when it dropped from his fingers, and a laugh escaped his lips that Mirama had never heard before. Then it seemed that he would never take his eyes off the horizon; he stared and stared as the moments went by, and she thought he had ceased to breathe.

But at last he moved and sighed like one very weary; his glance fell on the girl at his feet, and the meeting of their eyes was the dawn of Mirama's day.

WANDERLUST

By HARRIET ROGERS

"**M**ERE restlessness," they say. I only know
That something drives me forth to lands of snow,

To watch the sands drift on the desert bare,
To see the still sweet dawn in countries fair,

To feel the lift of alien seas that swing
And bear strange ships, the touch of winds that bring

A sweeter fragrance than the winds I knew,
A wilder tang than breath I ever drew.

LE COUP D'ONGLE

Par HENRI DE REGNIER

EH bien! mon cher, votre accident! Oui, j'ai lu cela dans les journaux! Bigre! comme vous y allez quand vous vous y mettez!

L'homme à qui s'adressait Maurice de Léry était un gros garçon de quarante-cinq ans environ, aux épaules larges, au visage régulier, aux yeux gais. Maurice de Léry le considérait, debout sur le trottoir du Cours la Reine, à l'angle de la rue Bayard, sous le beau soleil de ce matin de mai, avec l'admiration que l'on éprouve pour quelqu'un qui, à cette heure, aurait dû, logiquement, reposer à six pieds sous terre, au lieu de battre de sa semelle le sol de Paris. Il en avait une chance, ce Gaston Farbeau, et il avait raison de rire de ce bon rire jovial qui lui distendait la bouche et lui plissait le coin des yeux.

— Ah! ah! vous avez su! Ma foi, c'est vrai, ce fut une assez belle bouillie! L'auto en miettes et le chauffeur en morceaux, et votre serviteur dans le fossé, avec cette égratignure, tenez, là...

Du bout de son doigt, Gaston Farbeau se touchait la tempe. Un rond de taffetas y posait sa mouche noire. Il reprit:

— Un rien, un éclat de vitre, quelque chose de gentil, de délicat. Un coup d'ongle du Destin, quoi!

Maurice de Léry se mit à rire aussi:

— Allons, c'est parfait, mes félicitations. Mais je pense que vous avez renoncé à ces diables de machines!

Tout en parlant, Maurice de Léry se recula instinctivement. Une lourde automobile, dans un beuglement de trompe, avec une lueur de cuivre et de laque, rasa le trottoir de ses roues boudinées et cloutées, fila dans une odeur

pestilentielle, dépassa un fiacre, sépara deux passants et s'éloigna. Gaston Farbeau regardait affectueusement le monstre. Il avait pris Maurice de Léry par le bras:

— Renoncer à l'auto, mais ce serait stupide, mon cher! A cause des accidents? Les accidents, malheureux, sont une sauvegarde admirable, quand on y échappe, s'entend. Léry, je vous croyais une meilleure cervelle. Mais de quel côté allez-vous?

Maurice de Léry fit un geste. Gaston Farbeau l'entraînait:

— Par là? Je vous accompagne un peu, voulez-vous? Mais traversons donc. On cuit ici.

Une fois à l'ombre des arbres, Gaston Farbeau lâcha le bras de Maurice de Léry et resta un instant silencieux.

— Vous ne dites rien, Léry, mais je sais ce que vous pensez. Vous pensez: "Ce gros Farbeau n'aura que ce qu'il mérite. C'est un casse-cou. Il a toujours aimé à risquer sa peau. Autrefois, c'étaient les chevaux, maintenant c'est l'auto. Il y a eu aussi les ballons." Eh bien! pas du tout, mon cher. Si j'aime les dangers, ce n'est pas par goût, c'est par raison, c'est par prudence, c'est par peur. Oui, c'est par peur!

Il soupira:

— Chaque fois que j'ai failli me briser les membres ou me rompre la tête—et ça m'est arrivé souvent—ce n'était pas pour mon plaisir, je vous prie de le croire. Que voulez-vous, j'ai mes idées. Ne riez pas, je dis bien, mes idées, et la principale est que tout homme a autour de lui une certaine quantité d'événements qui le menacent. Oui, menacent, ne parlons que des

événements néfastes, les autres... Donc cette sorte d'orage mystérieux et redoutable qui nous entoure, il importe de diviser sa force, de la fragmenter, de façon qu'il ne nous frappe pas d'une seule décharge, mais qu'il s'épuise en secousses multiples. Il faut soutirer son destin comme le para-tonnerre soutire la nuée. Il faut provoquer son hostilité, lui tendre la pointe, le tenter, ne pas le laisser accumuler sa puissance. Il ne faut pas le laisser se réserver pour le grand coup qu'il médite contre toute vie. Chacun a son drame, son aventure, qui l'attend. Il faut aller au-devant d'eux. On sent obscurément de quel côté est le péril. Moi, je sais par où il viendra. Mais, voyez-vous, il n'y a pas d'exception. Il doit toujours nous *arriver* quelque chose, et il vaut mieux que cela arrive en détail... Ainsi, cette égratignure de l'autre jour, je ne changerais pas le rond de taffetas qui la couvre pour une pièce de vingt-cinq mille francs!...

Gaston Farbeau s'était arrêté. Il semblait indecis et paraissait regretter ses paroles. Soudain, il reprit le bras de Maurice de Léry et continua :

— La vie est drôle, tout de même. Il y a longtemps qu'on se connaît et on ne parle jamais sérieusement. "Bonjour, mon vieux. Bonsoir, mon petit," et on passe. Il faut une occasion. Eh bien! si vous me promettez de ne pas vous moquer de moi, je vous raconterai comment me sont venues mes idées...

Maurice de Léry acquiesça d'un signe de tête.

— Donc, mon cher, il y a une vingtaine d'années, vingt-cinq, pour être précis, car j'avais alors juste vingt ans, je fus invité, par mon ami Maxime Legrand, à passer le mois d'août chez ses parents, dans la petite ville de Touraine qu'ils habitaient, et que, depuis, il a si bien décrite dans ses romans. La proposition me plut et j'acceptai. A cette époque, j'étais un garçon tranquille et casanier. Je n'aimais ni les exercices du corps, ni les voyages, ni les sports. Je n'avais jamais tenu un fusil, ni monté un cheval. Quant aux ballons et aux autos, il n'en était naturellement pas question. La perspective de passer

un mois dans ce coin de province silencieux et souriant m'agréait fort. Songez donc, un mois de fainéantise, de repos, de cigarettes, en compagnie de ce brave Legrand, l'être le plus placide, le plus lent que j'aie jamais rencontré! L'avez-vous jamais entendu raconter, de sa voix égale, quelqu'une de ces histoires de province, sounoises et charmantes où il excelle?... Mais, allons au fait...

"Dès les premiers jours de mon installation, je fus enchanté. Maison vaste et confortable, corridors clairs, vieilles boiseries blanches, chambres gaies, cuisine savante, jardin exquis, un de ces bons potagers à l'ancienne mode où l'on se promène le long des espaliers. La famille de Legrand m'avait accueilli avec amitié. Quant à lui, il me narrait ses projets de livres, me fonurissait de cigares de choix, et me faisait les honneurs de sa ville natale.

"Il la connaissait sur le bout du doigt. J'entends par là qu'il possédait à fond les histoires, les ridicules, les travers de chacun. Il me faisait la chronique des familles de l'endroit. Vous savez que Legrand avec son air endormi, est un observateur très fin et très profond. Or la province, pour qui sait observer, est un sujet inépuisable. Les caractères, sous leur apparente platitude, y ont des dessous singuliers. Bref, je m'amusais beaucoup.

"Parmi les types les plus curieux était certainement le vieux marquis de Briqueville. Le bonhomme habitait en face des Legrand, une vieille et belle maison qui n'en était séparée que par une rue assez étroite, et, chaque jour, je voyais M. de Briqueville sortir pour sa promenade quotidienne et rentrer chez lui à l'heure dite. C'était un petit vieux, propre et sec, avec des favoris blancs, et je le regardais chaque fois avec admiration, car c'était un personnage admirable que ce M. de Briqueville.

"Né dans cette même maison où il logeait, il y avait grandi, s'y était marié, y avait vu naître son fils et sa fille, mariés aussi maintenant dans le voisinage,

car tout, dans l'existence de M. de Briqueville, s'était succédé avec un ordre parfait. Il se rendait d'ailleurs parfaitement compte de cette particularité de son destin, et il en était fier, car il l'attribuait à sa sagesse, à sa prévoyance et à sa pondération. M. de Briqueville était le type de l'homme à qui il n'est rien arrivé. Aucun de ses calculs n'avait jamais été trompé; aucun de ses projets n'avait manqué de se réaliser. Il ne se souvenait pas d'avoir jamais été en face de quoi que ce fût d'imprévu. Il n'avait jamais couru aucun danger. Les événements qui s'étaient présentés à lui avaient été toujours ceux qu'il attendait et qui devaient logiquement se produire. Tout était exactement à sa place dans sa vie et un sort minutieux et raisonnable y avait tout ordonné."

Gaston Farbeau se tut un moment, puis continua:

— Tel qu'il était, ce bonhomme Briqueville, ma foi, je l'enviais presque et, à certains jours, il me prenait le désir d'être comme lui. J'étais libre. Pourquoi ne m'établirais-je pas dans ce coin de Touraine, à l'abri des hasards de la vie et loin des vaines agitations du monde? L'influence du milieu provincial, si calme et si doux où je vivais, m'engourdisait; et puis à cette époque, je rêvais de paix, de repos, de paresse. On croit communément que la jeunesse est remuante, aventureuse. Pas toujours, mon cher. Il y a des jeunes gens de petit désir qui ne demandent qu'à s'acoquiner, qu'à vivoter. J'étais de ceux-là...

Maurice de Léry avait jeté sa cigarette pour mieux écouter Gaston Farbeau.

— J'étais, un jour, occupé à ces rêveries, un dimanche de la fin du mois d'août, chaud et un peu orageux. Il était à peu près trois heures de l'après-midi. Je me reposais dans ma chambre. J'avais approché mon fauteuil de la fenêtre ouverte. La lourdeur de l'atmosphère m'accablait, et le silence de la maison, de la rue et de toute la ville

aidait à ma torpeur. Les Legrand étaient allés faire une visite à une vieille tante, et Maxime les avait accompagnés. Une mouche volait. Mes yeux se fermèrent. Dans mon demi-sommeil, j'entendis un pas dans la rue que je reconnus pour celui de M. de Briqueville. Comment, il était dehors à cette heure! D'ordinaire, il ne sortait pas si tôt. C'était bien lui cependant. J'écoutai le bruit de sa clé dans la serrure et le claquement de la porte, et je m'endormis...

Gaston Farbeau ôta son chapeau et passa la main dans sa chevelure rude et déjà grisonnante:

— Je ne sais pas si je dormais depuis longtemps, mais je fus réveillé en sursaut par un cri effroyable. Ce cri partait de la maison d'en face. Ah! mon cher, je n'oublierai jamais cette voix et ce cri, cri d'angoisse, de terreur qui se prolongeait avec des modulations d'épouvante et qui me mit debout haletant. On avait dû l'entendre de toute la ville, ce cri! Il me semblait que la maison avait dû s'en lézarder, car c'était un cri, voyez-vous, à fendre les pierres. Ah! sûrement, il était arrivé quelque chose chez M. de Briqueville.

La main de Gaston Farbeau serra fortement le bras de Maurice de Léry.

— Quoi, on ne l'a jamais su, mais je le sais, moi! Quand on est entré dans la chambre, on l'a trouvé accroupi dans un coin, le dos à la muraille, les yeux ouverts, la bouche béante, la figure convulsée d'une terreur indicible. Il était mort, et on n'était en présence ni d'un crime ni d'un accident. M. de Briqueville était mort de lui-même, et c'était de l'air stagnant de sa propre existence que s'était formé le coup de foudre qui l'avait anéanti, l'événement formidable et imaginaire auquel il avait succombé...

Et Gaston Farbeau touchait du doigt, comme un talisman, le petit rond de taffetas noir qui recouvrait, à sa tempe gauche, ce qu'il avait appelé: le coup d'ongle du Destin.

L'OUBLIEUSE

Par NICOLETTE HENNIQUE

BIEN que nous nous aimions, je m'éperds aujourd'hui,
Et je rêve qu'un jour pareil à de la nuit
Peut-être ma présence et mon cœur t'auront fui
Sans que leur fuite ne revienne.

Est-ce possible! Un autre, alors, m'occuperait,
Capable de biffer tes gestes, ton attrait?...
Nulle mémoire en mon esprit ne survivrait
Assez pour que je me souvienne,

Et celle, maintenant, qui m'inonde le corps
Comme un unique son fait de plusieurs accords,
N'évoquerait plus rien, personnes ou décors,
Rien qu'une image obscure et louche?....

C'est possible. Dans un misérable avenir,
Quelque chose d'à peu près fini va finir;
Et je n'aurai pas su garder ton souvenir,
Pas même le goût de ta bouche!

Et j'ai peur que l'oubli ne m'étreigne demain!
Car — soyons francs — ce soir de mélisse, d'ormin,
Déjà, j'ai beau reprendre avec toi le chemin
Qu'est un long regard en arrière,

Je ne découvre plus le charme de tes yeux,
Ta force, ta beauté, ni ton calme joyeux,
Ni ce reflet profond que l'on tient des aïeux
Et de leur grâce devancière.

Ta voix?... Qu'est donc ta voix! J'ai perdu sa chanson.
S'il me restait au moins d'en contenir le son!
Mais pas un bruit, pas un écho, pas un tronçon:
Je suis de marbre et non plus femme.

A peine seras-tu mieux oublié le jour
Où, de tout être ayant aimé, de tout amour,
Il ne demeurera, vis-à-vis le ciel sourd,
Qu'une forme raide et qu'une âme.

THE LADY GOES TO THE THEATER WITH ME

By CHANNING POLLOCK

IT is a great occasion when The Lady goes to the theater with me! That we go every night of our lives subtracts nothing from the importance of the event. Most people dine every night, yet I don't remember having heard anyone assert that dinner is less enjoyable or momentous because it is eaten regularly. On the contrary, the more attention men and women pay to their provender, the more discriminating and fastidious they become, and the more certain they are to appreciate what is really good. This rule obtains in the theater just as it does in the restaurant.

So The Lady and I pick our play far in advance, and look forward to enjoying it with anticipatory zest quite equal to that with which the veriest epicure awaits his *Terrine de Foie Gras aux Truffes*. It is a detail that we must partake of everything on the theatrical *carte du jour*; we plan to see the least promising entertainments first and to leave those of which we are reasonably certain until the last. When it happens that there is nothing new on Broadway, we journey to the Bronx in search of a diverting melodrama or drop in somewhere for an hour of vaudeville, finding pleasure in the very odor of the playhouse, in the blare and scraping of the orchestra, in the swish and jangle of the curtain as it is drawn into the flies. If the performance is worth while, we are the better pleased, but, once back in the habit of theater-going, we count upon turning about George Berkeley's famous line and closing the day with the drama.

I AM always amused when someone comes to me with the time-worn statement that a professional critic cannot write fairly of plays because he is tired of them. No yearning yokel, spending his first evening in an orchestra seat, could enjoy the entertainment as do The Lady and I. "The man who thoroughly appreciates a good picture," said William Morris, "must have painted one," and, while nobody would venture to say that only dramatists can judge the drama, it is certain that the more the spectator knows of the requirements of the theater and the difficulties to be overcome, the higher his estimate of the skill which fills those requirements and overcomes those difficulties. To believe the reverse is to assert that the best possible audience would be an audience of small children.

As a matter of fact, an actor will tell you that he had rather play to a gathering of actors than to any other. Nowhere else will you find the enthusiasm to be seen at a professional matinee. Theaters get the bulk of their custom from regular theater-goers; from amusement lovers who attend the play at least twice a week, not from a constantly changing public of novices. Everywhere and always understanding makes for interest. If you and I go into a great factory, and you are a mechanic and I am not, which of us will pay the closer attention to the machinery—which will have keener pleasure in its niceties and perfections, you or I?

So The Lady Who Goes to the Theater with Me thrills with delightful antic-

ipation, and finds the answering thrill in me every night as we turn toward Broadway. We walk rapidly so that we may not miss a moment of the performance, and discuss its merits and demerits with fervor when the last curtain has fallen. Tired, forsooth! It was only after my first thousand evenings at the play that I really began to be a fresh and eager theater-goer!

NOVEMBER began very dully in New York, and ended with a sudden burst of activity. Up to the last day of the month there were only nine new productions, all told, while ten were scheduled for the single week beginning with that date. Two of the nine were absolute failures; the others achieved varying degrees of success, though none scored unequivocally. The current season has not yet vied with that of 1907-'08, which brought forth "The Witching Hour," "The Thief," "Paid in Full," "The Servant in the House," and "The Merry Widow."

EASILY the most notable play of the month was "Salvation Nell," in which Mrs. Fiske is appearing at the Hackett Theater and through which she introduced to the public a new author, Edward Sheldon, Harvard, '08. I don't know exactly what Mr. Sheldon's university, and the year of his graduation, have to do with "Salvation Nell," but I mention them because most of the newspaper critics seemed to consider them of primary importance. They "played up" that "Harvard, '08" in first paragraphs, and made deductions from it, instead of from the piece. If Mrs. Fiske's press agent had been dumb, and her dramatist invisible, "Salvation Nell" undoubtedly would have had a better reception in New York. Mr. Sheldon isn't an impressive person. Very few literary gentlemen are, for that matter, and it is always a bit of a shock, after two hours of lofty ideals, noble sentiment and heroic deeds, to be confronted by the shivering, white-faced man who usually is responsible for them.

A tiny touch of gray at Mr. Sheldon's

temples would have increased the chances of "Salvation Nell." As it is, no other offering of the year has been so much discussed, and, with amusement lovers, discussion is the mother of investment. The consensus of opinion has been that "Salvation Nell" is photographic rather than dramatic; that it presents a series of moving pictures taken at random in certain localities rather than the inmost thoughts and emotions of men and women. Those who do not like the play contend that "Salvation Nell" is a production of the camera, not of the brush, and that photography is not art.

To a certain extent this contention is justified. There is no searching psychology in Mr. Sheldon's work, no profound knowledge of human nature, no single dramatic situation likely to be long remembered. It is the outside of life which he discloses. The stage photograph, however, differs from the common or album photograph in that it cannot be created mechanically. Anyone who thinks it easy to reproduce every-day existence in a play has never tried to do it. The average author can't write a five-minute conversation that sounds like the talk of ordinary people. How much more difficult, then, to pick up Tenth Avenue and Cherry Hill and put them down again right on the stage of the Hackett Theater. Art is life with a stick in it, and "Salvation Nell" may lack the stick, but Mr. Sheldon's play is life, and, therefore, tremendously and vitally interesting. It isn't to be mentioned in the same breath with such other offerings as "The Fighting Hope," which may be art, but assuredly are nothing else.

As you may have inferred from the reference to Cherry Hill, the new piece deals with the problems of the slums. The poor we have always with us—in drama. Nell, whose name one picks out of a cast that looks like a page from the telephone book, is first disclosed in Sid McGovern's Empire Bar, at Tenth Avenue and Forty-eighth Street. It is a very real bar, this place of

McGovern's, with a Christmas greeting soaped across its mirror, with two real barkeeps, a real "ladies' parlor," a score of real hangers-on, and so much real bar language that the very foot-lights blushed red before the act was over. Nell is the scrub-woman, and she is brutishly in love with Jim Platt, a loafer of the lowest type. Indeed, she is soon to become the mother of Platt's child, and, on this account, has been turned out of one or two rather better positions than that she occupies with Sid McGovern.

Somebody tries to kiss Nell, and Jim, influenced less by chivalry than by whisky, almost kills the man. He is dragged off to jail, his victim is taken to the hospital, and Sid, enraged at the prospective loss of his license, gently but firmly requests Nell to "get the hell out of here." "I'll give you fifteen minutes," he adds, with unconscious irony, "an' if yer not gone by then I'll kick ye out myself—s'elp me Gawd!" Nell has no place to go, and, at this moment, Myrtle Odell, a police raid on whose home has furnished one of the spectacular incidents of the act, invites her to adopt the profession which is more noted for its age than for its respectability. Nell is about to accept the invitation, when "Hallelujah Maggie," a lieutenant in the Salvation Army, comes to the rescue, and takes her away.

Oh, the wonders that are accomplished between acts in plays! If all our struggle and sweat, patient reader, might be between the acts of our lives! The next scene of "Salvation Nell" shows a room in a tenement house, and Nell in it, a valued member of the "Army," with a ready-to-wear redemption and a little boy, who is the son of Jim Platt. The father is "doing time up the river," but he returns a few minutes later and wants Nell to go out West with him. It soon develops that this Western trip is not altogether a matter of choice with Jim, who has planned a burglary and wants to "make a quick get-away" in the morning. Nell's battle with him is real drama. She begs, pleads, finally

threatens "squealing" to the police, and actually goes as far as the 'phone, where her love proves too great for her, and she hangs up the receiver without having said anything beyond a broken "Lieutenant Andrews, there's sumpin I—I—" This agony at the 'phone is the biggest moment in the play, the nearest thing to actual mental conflict.

Jim finally "makes his get-away" by knocking Nell senseless, but he doesn't commit the robbery, and in the next act we find him waiting around the "barracks" for the mother of his boy. There is a scene between them in which Nell admits her love but refuses to go back to him until she has some assurance of his regeneration. "Yer my Jim," she says, "an' no one'll ever take yer place! . . . I can't save ye, but God will . . . We've lost each other in this life, but, dear, this life ain't all! Some day we'll meet soul to soul, an' then, Jim, we'll be together—always." Nell, however, isn't obliged to wait for a reunion in that hereafter where, at best, there can be no marrying or giving in marriage. Ten minutes later Jim, still loafing on that street corner, gives way to an impassioned plea which heart-racked Nell has made to humanity at large. "I need ye," he cries, stretching his arms out to her; "I need yer help." "Wait fer me after the meetin'," says Nell. "I want ye to take me home."

"SALVATION NELL," all in all, is a pretty big play. It may be photographic and discursive and a lot of other things that it has been said to be, but it compels interest, and a young woman with a tambourine who stands in front of the theater reaps a rich harvest every night from the people who have witnessed it. That jingling criticism of coins means more than mere journalistic comment can possibly mean. As I have already remarked, there is nothing splendidly dramatic in the piece. The story concerns itself with many people and things not directly connected with the main theme, and there is a low-comedy harlot who gets terribly on one's nerves after the first act.

But, aside from its technique and its ethics, aside from the fact that it gives brilliant promise for a new author, "Salvation Nell" is worth seeing. It is worth seeing as an amateur theater-goer. It won't bore you.

Mrs. Fiske has magnificent moments in the performance, but her portrayal of Nell isn't really quite as masterly as you have been led to believe. She never succeeds in hiding the fact that she is a gentlewoman. It sticks out through the holes in the saloon drudge's dress, and manifests itself in the tones of her voice. I don't know of any quality harder to assume or to conceal than gentility, and dragged feathers don't unmake a fine bird in "Salvation Nell." Mrs. Fiske has learned none of the little tricks of the gutter. Do you remember how, in the melodrama called "Sporting Life," an actress named Elita Proctor Otis, in the role of an adventuress pretending to be a "lady," suddenly reminded you of her origin by mopping the perspiration from her face with a handkerchief?

I should never have suspected that Jim Platt was Holbrook Blinn if the fact hadn't been set forth on the program. Mr. Blinn's performance of the loutish, drunken rowdy is absolutely convincing. Arnold Daly, a player of rare attainments, presented the same type in "The Regeneration," but his characterization didn't rank with the portrait which Mr. Blinn lends to "Salvation Nell." Hope Latham, last seen here as the Baroness Granclos in "My Wife," starts out beautifully as the low-comedy harlot. Later on, she over-fiddles herself, sacrificing all sense of character in her effort to create laughter. Mary Madison, who afterward turned out to be Charlotte Thompson, the playwright, in search of experience, is excellent in the role of "Hallelujah Maggie." In point of fact, none of the forty parts in the piece is badly played. The scenery is simply wonderful. Sid McGovern's bar and the street in Cherry Hill make one forget that one is in a theater. Mrs. Fiske's production shows that, if it is

not easy to be David Belasco, at least it is quite possible.

"SALVATION NELL" is draped truth in necktie and goloshes, beside the naked realism that "Mimi Aguglia and her Unrivalled Company of Sicilian Players" has been presenting at the Broadway Theater. Mrs. Fiske raised the question whether photography is art, and Signora Aguglia caused it to be answered in a resounding negative. Personally, I am not yet convinced. The drama inspires more doubt in my mind than does any other one subject, except religion. Isn't the truest drama that which most accurately depicts life? Passing through phases of over-sophistication and over-elaboration, may not the playwright, the player and the play-goer return to the primitive? Is that the completion of the circle? I don't know. Strange as it may appear, there is a great deal I don't know. I am a professional critic, but I'm not always sure, and I'm very often wrong.

Signora Aguglia came out of sunny Sicily, and created a tremendous sensation in London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna. The stir she made in New York was not far-reaching, and her business, partly because of managerial mistakes, was exceedingly bad. There weren't a hundred people at the Broadway the night I saw this dauntless troupe, and even this scanty audience was distinctly of the kind known as "freak." Long-haired men and short-haired women abounded, while an elderly female, conspicuous in a stage box, affected a South-before-the-War gown that The Lady Who Goes to the Theater with Me thought must have been worn in settlement of an election bet.

The play that evening was "Malia," the *pièce de résistance* of the Sicilians. Luigi Capuana wrote the tragedy, and it is a dainty trifle, which deals with sexual psychopathy with a frankness generally confined to medical books. Between the program and such fragments of the performance as did not require translation, I gathered that "Malia" concerned the unholy passion

of Jana, the daughter of a peasant farmer, for Cola, the betrothed of her sister Nedda. Jana's passion was one of the fragments that did not require translation. It began with symptoms not unlike those of sea-sickness, and ended in what Frederic Schroeder, of the *Evening Globe*, called a "specializing manifestation of erotic mania and epileptic acrobatics"—a wreathing, writhing exhibition of desire gone mad that made the expressions of the young woman in Sudermann's "The Fires of St. John" seem like the manner of a matinee girl pleading for ice cream soda. Cola didn't hold out long against such temptation, and, in the last act of the drama, Jana's betrothed, Ninu, cut his throat with a razor. This was a pretty little picture to take home to the children, and a fitting conclusion to as remarkable an exposition of elemental emotion as has ever been shown in New York.

Whatever may be said of the unfitness of the play to the tastes of effete civilization, there can be no doubt of its amazing fidelity to the primitive existence its author meant to depict. It is a fine specimen of the dramatic photography of which I have written so much in this article, leaving possible no criticism save as to the selection of material for the playwright's camera. Perhaps in time we shall consider this literal transcription of life the highest art. As I have already said: Who knows?

Of its kind the acting was as remarkable as the action. In the matter of earnestness, of simple, sincere, unselfish devotion to their work, nobody in our country can hold a candle to these swarthy sons and mustached daughters of Italy. They played to empty benches with as much seriousness as they could have displayed to a packed house. And, moreover, they played without thought of self-aggrandizement, without egotism, without a touch of affectation. The mirror they held up to nature was never a vanity mirror. Signora Aguglia took the center of the stage when the movement of the piece required it. When the other

characters were more concerned she retired to the back drop, where she emoted with complete disregard of the audience. She was never the "star" of the performance for a moment, only an harmonious part of a machine moving smoothly to create an illusion. She acted a scene of hysteria with amazing vigor, and yet, when she took a curtain call immediately afterward it was without heaving bosom, rolling eyes and hands at her throat. The art of the Sicilians isn't our art, but if modesty and simplicity could be taught by example, I'd gladly have started a subscription to send our spoiled foot-light favorites to the Broadway Theater.

THE time actually consumed in performing "Lady Frederick," the new Somerset Maugham comedy in which Ethel Barrymore is appearing at the Hudson Theater, is one hour and twenty-two minutes. Therefore, if you occupy an orchestra seat, you are paying two and a half cents a minute for your recreation. As entertainment "Lady Frederick" is worth three times that sum; as a play—well, as a play, it isn't.

Most theatrical managers are like the vendor in "Aladdin" who went about crying: "New lamps for old!" These dealers in amusement do not actually call "New plays for old," but they certainly exhibit a marked preference for the well-tried, the ordinary, the conventional. "Lady Frederick" contains no single idea, no character, scene or situation, that is not perfectly familiar to the theater-goer. Its story, in every essential, is the story of "Her Sister," in which Miss Barrymore was seen last year at the Hudson. Its incidents are notably similar to incidents in dozens of other comedies. The justification of the piece is that the old material is cleverly handled, furbished with the nicest embroidery, so that, to the superficial observer, it has quite the look of a new dress—I mean drama.

In "Her Sister," a young girl, Eleanor Anderson, is betrothed to a callow youth, Ernest Bickley, whose mother

objects strongly to the union. Miss Anderson's reputation has suffered through a fault of her sister for which she has taken the blame. She finally surrenders Ernest, and falls into the waiting arms of world-wise Arnold Cullingworth. Substituting Lady Frederick for Miss Anderson, Lord Mereston for Bickley, and Paradine Fouldes for Cullingworth, this is precisely the plot of "Lady Frederick." The woman in the latter case is a good-humored, poverty-stricken Irish girl instead of a fortune teller, and the mother's objection is due to the suspicion that she is an adventuress. Of course she isn't anything of the kind, and promptly heaps coals of fire by returning Lord Mereston to the family hearth. In real life she probably would have been an adventuress, and would have married Lord Mereston, and made him very, very happy.

Mr. Maugham's current work, like his version of "The Lady of Lyons," called "Jack Straw," abounds in witty dialogue and in amusing episode. There is a scene in which my lady, by sheer tact, wins over a dunning dress-maker. This is as original as it is amusing. There is another scene, recalling the dialogue between David Warfield and Marie Bates in "The Auctioneer," in which two young people about to be married discuss the future of a possible son.

Assumed age cannot wither nor costume spoil the infinite charm of Ethel Barrymore. It carried her through to victory in a role less suited to her than to a dozen other actresses, chief among them Henrietta Crosman, whose delightful brogue would have been a treat in "Lady Frederick." The supporting company, which includes Bruce McRae and Jessie Millward, is agreeably efficient, and the settings are in the good taste expected from Charles Frohman.

ONE of the most encouraging signs of the season has been the commercial success of José Echegaray's "El Gran Galeato," produced under the title of "The World and His Wife" by William

Faversham at Daly's. A few years ago this remarkable work was thought possible only as diet for faddists, and was acted for the benefit of a select few—very select and exceedingly few—at the Carnegie Lyceum.

In its simplicity, its directness, and its steady march to inevitable tragedy "El Gran Galeato" closely follows the form of the Greek dramatists. A perfectly natural and commonplace combination of circumstances gives birth to a catastrophe, foreseen from the very beginning, yet unavoidable, utterly relentless. Don Julian, a gentleman residing in Madrid, adopts into his household a young man, Don Ernesto, the son of a dead friend. Don Ernesto is a fine fellow, and greatly beloved both by his benefactor and by his benefactor's wife, Dona Teodora. Venomous gossip soon busies itself with the names of these two, first beating its head against the stone walls of Don Julian's house, finally making an entrance upon the lips of his brother, Don Severo. In the beginning, the husband laughs at the stories brought to him; then he becomes suspicious, and, at last, he believes.

At the first attack, Ernesto has left the home in which he has grown to manhood, and taken temporary lodgings of his own. He engages passage for America. Teodora, learning of his proposed departure, goes to him to say secretly the adieu that, a month before, she could have said freely and openly. Julian, coming here to fight a duel with one of his wife's traducers, surprises her, and compels her to take refuge in another room. He is mortally wounded, and his voice, expressing between groans complete faith in Teodora, brings her to his side. Julian, convinced of her guilt by the fact of her presence, denounces her. This situation, one of the greatest of dramatic devices, scarcely halts the story in its progress to the ultimate tragedy, where, Julian having died cursing his wife, Teodora is driven perforce into the arms of the man for whom she had felt nothing but motherly friendship up to the time of the calumny.

It was one of the morning newspapers which said of "The Blue Mouse," the new Clyde Fitch offering at the Lyric, that it was "not a play to be taken seriously." It isn't, and it won't be. Inasmuch as this piece, adapted from the German of Alexander Engel and Julius Horst, is farce of the frankest kind, the stricture of the paper aforesaid isn't really as damning as it sounds.

As a matter of fact, if you are willing to word your desire for amusement "Laughs Wanted; No Questions Asked," you will find "The Blue Mouse" quite irresistible. The story begins when Augustus Rollett, secretary to the president of the Inter-State Railroad, discovers that promotion may be reached easily through his chief's love of pretty women. Augustus isn't ready to go the lengths of the husband in "Paid in Full," so, instead of employing his own wife to cajole the president, he hires a dancer, known as "Blue Mouse," to pretend to be his wife. The subsequent action is as rapid, as blinding, and as indescribable as the movement of a cinematograph. Everybody gets into trouble, and out again, and in again, and out again, until the spectator has forgotten what happened two minutes before and is howling with mirth at what is happening at the moment.

"THE PATRIOT," which has brought William Collier back to the Garrick Theater, is the least clever of the Collier farces up to date, but, like the wound which was "not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door," it will suffice. Lacking the logic and the substance of "The Dictator" or "Caught in the Rain," it is still so genial, flippant and inconsequential that it serves agreeably as a vehicle for the pleasant personality of Mr. Collier.

What there is of the story concerns a young Britisher, Sir Augustus, whose mining operations in Nevada are checked by the receipt of tidings that he has been left a huge fortune in England. He returns home, only to find that he likes America better than the land in which he must live under

the conditions of the will, and a little girl in Bullfrog better than the noblewoman he is expected to marry. Consequently, he goes back to the mines. Mr. Collier, in the title role, again shows himself to be the most insouciant of our light comedians, and his company gives him what little assistance is needed.

It has long been my habit, compelled by the fact that a whole month sometimes intervenes between the night on which I see a play and the day on which I write about it, to jot down in my program such impressions as come to me. I can give you no truer idea of "The Stronger Sex," in which Annie Russell is acting at Weber's, than by relating that I came away from the performance without having made a memorandum. "The Stronger Sex" is pure water; it has absolutely no taste or flavor. Its story, which I told in THE SMART SET last year, after having witnessed the comedy in London, concerns an American girl, married for her money by an impecunious aristocrat. The girl discovers the true state of affairs on her wedding day, and puts her husband through his paces with Petruchian severity until she accomplishes a miraculous reform, and he goes to work for a living. Miss Russell is exquisite in this role, but even her charm cannot carry a play that is forgotten five minutes after its final curtain.

THE antithesis of "The Stronger Sex" is "Via Wireless," at the Liberty. This straightforward melodrama is the work of a greater number of authors than usually collaborate on an English musical comedy. The only scene in it, however, worthy of extended comment—the scene around which the rest of the piece was constructed—was invented by E. Balmer and I. W. Edwards. The episode in question takes place in the "wireless room" of a ship at sea, and shows the operator receiving messages from another vessel which is sinking somewhere in the storm and darkness. This device, which makes

a powerful appeal to the imagination, has the advantage of wonderful staging, and affords the most exciting half hour to be had on Broadway. If you are one of those persons willing to pay for a single thrill—ten cents to loop the loop or ten thousand dollars for a trip in an aeroplane—you will feel well repaid for a visit to "Via Wireless."

"BLUE GRASS," a racing drama by Paul Armstrong, one of the authors of "Wireless," was a brief incident of the month at the Majestic.

NOVEMBER brought to New York two musical comedies, one of them, "The Boys and Betty," a success on the score of its modesty, and the other, "Miss Innocence," a success on the score—well, not for exactly the same reason. Marie Cahill, who is the star of "The Boys and Betty" at Wallack's, advertises extensively that her chorus is attired in long skirts. What difference that makes is not obvious when the young women begin dancing, but Miss Cahill herself has a sweet personality—she is much more like your wife than like a musical comedy star—and the atmosphere of her production is agreeably wholesome. Her vehicle, written by George V. Hobart, is rather a comedy with music than a musical comedy. It boasts a logical story and one or two really good situations. Miss Cahill has two excellent songs, the first a piquant ditty, called "A Little Farther," which she sings wonderfully, and the other a fetching ballad, entitled "The Arab Love Song." I recommend "The Boys and Betty" to you, and you will be quite safe in recommending it to Aunt Patience.

ANNA HELD is the star of "Miss Innocence," which F. Ziegfeld, Jr., presents at the New York Theater. Nobody ever went to an Anna Held show because he couldn't get tickets for a meeting of the Christian Endeavor, and, whatever you may say when you get home, you will see in "Miss Innocence" precisely what you expected to see when you paid a premium of one hun-

dred per cent. for your seats. Mr. Ziegfeld has gone farther than any other man alive in proving how enjoyable a musical comedy may be without a book or much music. He gathers together six or eight clever principals, a chorus, picked the year the peach crop *didn't* fail, three or four big spectacular novelties, an array of magnificent scenery, several hundred costumes that make up in quality what they lack in quantity, and Julian Mitchell. The result always runs out the season on Broadway.

THE spectacular novelties in "Miss Innocence" are particularly pleasing. There is a song the chorus of which several young women play upon bells ingeniously concealed in their parasols. A lively number, with clever "business," is sung by an ensemble engaged in getting in and out of a Continental railway train, while another number, "Yankiana Rag" rendered by men and women supposed to be supping at L'Abbaye, fairly brings the audience to its feet. A third melody is rendered by girl artists while they paint illuminated pictures from colors of liquid fire with "brushes of comets' hair." There is a lyric taken from "Three Weeks," with seven Pauls, seven Princesses, and, seven tiger skins, and there are—oh! ever so many original ideas worked out into beautiful and entertaining realities.

Miss Held is dainty and graceful in the piece, and good fun is furnished by Charles A. Bigelow, and Emma Janvier. However, it is the chorus—beg pardon, the "show girls"—who are really the principals in "Miss Innocence." Safe to say a more dazzling exhibition of pulchritude, and a more generous display of feminine loveliness, has never sent soaring the prices of first-row seats. Very little of the Anna Held chorus blushes unseen—if it blushes at all. I felt the most profound sympathy for a gentleman who sat near me on the opening night at the New York, and who, dropping a dime in what he fondly believed to be an opera-glass box, got in return a neat little package of Schuyler's assorted chocolates.

A ROAD MAP OF THE NEW BOOKS

By H. L. MENCKEN

WE will begin with what the architects of rituals call a responsive service, to wit:

Q.—What is a novel?

A.—A novel is an imaginative, artistic and undialectic composition in prose, not less than 20,000 nor more than 500,000 words in length, and divided into chapters, sections, books or other symmetrical parts, in which certain interesting, significant and probable (though fictitious) human transactions are described both in cause and effect, with particular reference to the influence exerted upon the ideals, opinions, morals, temperament and overtacts of some specified person or persons by the laws, institutions, superstitions, traditions and customs of such portions of the human race and the natural phenomena of such portions of the earth as may come under his, her or their observation or cognizance, and by the ideals, opinions, morals, temperament and overt acts of such person or persons as may come into contact, either momentarily or for longer periods, with him, her or them, either by actual, social or business intercourse, or through the medium of books, newspapers, the church, the theater or some other person or persons.

This definition represents the toil of several days and makes severe demands upon both eye and attention, but it is well worth the time spent upon it and the effort necessary to assimilate it, for it is entirely without loophole, blowhole or other blemish. It describes, with scientific accuracy, every real novel ever written, and by the same token,

it bars out every last near-novel, pseudo-novel and quasi-novel, however colorable, and every romance, rhapsody, epic, saga, stuffed short story, tract and best-seller known to bibliographers.

This definition, in truth, has a quarrel with the great bulk of current fiction. One and all, the books that pour from the presses, in their bright gauds of gilt and red, are labeled novels, but often their labels mislead sadly.

Now and then, however, there appears upon the bookstalls a new book which meets upon fair ground those great books of other years which set the bounds of fiction's symphonic form—a new book which tells, with insight, imagination and conviction, the story of some one man's struggle with his fate—which shows us, like a vast fever chart, the ebb and flow of his ideas and ideals, and the multitude of forces shaping them—which gives us, in brief, a veritable, moving chronicle of a human being driven, tortured and fashioned by the blood within him and the world without—a chronicle with a beginning, a middle and an end, and some reasonable theory of existence over all. Such a book is "The Pit"—a true novel. And such a book is Miss Mary Johnston's new novel, "LEWIS RAND" (*Houghton-Mifflin*, \$1.50).

"LEWIS RAND," it must be admitted at the start, is far from flawless. In form, for example, it is immeasurably below "Henry Esmond"; in its painting in of color and character it is

inferior to "Huckleberry Finn"—the greatest work of fiction yet produced by an American; and in its analysis of incident and motive it is not to be compared to "Lord Jim." But while it thus falls short of the first rank, it is unquestionably at the top of the second rank. There is sincerity in every line, and there is an epic sweep and breadth to it. Planned lavishly and written with infinite pains, it is not only a good story of a strong man's losing battle with Fate, but an illuminating study of an epoch of and a conflict of civilizations.

The man we see is a poor white of the Virginia of Jefferson's day. Born to toil, he is rowelled, from early youth, by high ambitions, for mingling with his father's plodding burgher blood there is a more fiery strain from his mother. A chance meeting with the Sage of Monticello gives shape to his yearnings and he enters upon the study of the law. In Virginia a lawyer is, *ipso facto*, a politician, and Lewis Rand is apt at both trades. From the very start, he is a young man of obvious promise, and as the years drift past this promise is realized. That rising of the yeoman against the baron which has Jefferson for its philosopher, finds in Rand, in so far as Virginia is concerned, its prophet and hero. With his horde behind him, he triumphs over the old ruling caste with ease and the State is at his feet.

But in all this delirium of success Rand finds disquiet. He is the master, true enough, at the polls, and if he gives the word he may be Governor of Virginia and the peer of princes, but in the face of all that worldly glory is he the equal, after all, of his foes? He has carried the war into the enemy's country by making a daughter of the Churchills his wife, but isn't it a fact that the Churchills and the Rands are still of different castes, as unlike as the Roman and the Hun? The thought drives Rand into bitter rage and fills his mind with plans for vast, fantastic revenges and conquests.

It is at this time that Aaron Burr—sleek, confident and plausible—crosses

his path. Burr dreams of an empire beyond the Mississippi, and Rand sees in it his opportunity. He will cast in his lot with the dreamer and then trample the dreamer down. Jacqueline Rand, of the Churchill clan, will become an empress! He, Rand, disdaining acceptance as a mere equal, will lift the Churchills up! Governor of Virginia? Jefferson's heir? Pooh!

But then Fate steps in, with her grim smile. Burr is arrested, the empire vanishes, and Rand faces the cold, accusing eye of Jefferson. It is only by his betrayed patron's generosity, indeed, that he escapes a trial for treason. Even as it is, the story of his gigantic plot reaches the ears of one of his foes—and that man is Ludwell Cary, most serene of the baronial caste and most noble of vanquished rivals in love. It is not because Cary has loved Jacqueline that Rand hates him, for Jacqueline's love and loyalty are perfect, but because in him is visualized the supremely desirable and the eternally unattainable. One day, riding along a lonely road Rand and Cary meet. Next morning Cary is found dead—and as the story closes we see Rand preparing to enter the felon's dock to answer the charge of murder.

A very clever woman of my acquaintance, reading this sound and moving novel, objected to Rand's sudden slaying of Cary without immediate provocation as a mere trick of the theater. But to me it seems anything but that. It is, indeed, one of the surest touches in the book. From the start the murder is as inevitable as Hamlet's slaying of the king, and one glimpses its gathering shadow in scene after scene. Rand's fight, it is ever plain, is not for kingship over the rabble, but for acceptance by his vanquished foes. All his vast energies and talents are shaped to that end, and when, after his narrow escape from disgrace, it slowly dawns upon him that the barrier before him is not an artificial thing, to be torn down at will, but a wall impenetrable and everlasting, his rage becomes ungovernable. In its very breaking of all restraint, indeed, appears proof that

the barrier is real—that, after all, the difference between caste and caste is fixed, not by man himself, but by Providence. A Cary, in all ages, has his passions in hand, even when they are most fiery; but a Rand, unschooled by generations of formula and inhibition, is their slave. And so Lewis Rand kills Ludwell Cary—because he can't help it.

In detail, "LEWIS RAND" is of uneven texture. Here and there the story lumbers, and now and again it runs thin, but for the greater part Miss Johnston's technique suffices for her plan. She is obviously writing, not to meet the current fashion, but to please herself—and it is just such writing that makes the best of reading. With a stage sparsely peopled, she has opportunity to give her characters rotundity, and out of it grows reality. One may quarrel, at first blush, with Jacqueline's goodness, but if one recalls the ideals of feminine duty which obtained in the sub-Potomac palatinates of her day, she grows in plausibility. So, too, the Carys and the Churchills. The century-long battle has been won by the Rands and the old aristocracy is no more, but the conflict was very real while it lasted, and in Miss Johnston's understanding of its savagery and significance lies the chief value of her novel. The siege of caste by caste is not merely a part of the story's machinery. On the contrary, the story itself is but a fable visualizing the siege, just as in "Nostromo" one's mind is made to dwell, not upon the adventures of Nostromo himself, but upon that maddening world-riddle—that unanswerable question as to the meaning of life—which lies beneath them.

Once upon a time a French critic named Georges Polti wrote a book entitled "Les Trente-six Situations Dramatiques" in which he essayed to prove that there were but thirty-six possible dramatic situations. A multitude of other critics straightway fell upon this Polti and wrote him down an ass, which has been his rank and appellation ever since. But even had his

fellows sprung not so enthusiastically to his walloping, the world would have found proof of his fatuity, after many years in a zymotic romance called "LILA SERI," by William Lee Howard (*Badger*, \$1.50), for in this book there is a dramatic situation entirely new to fiction. Search the plays, novels, stuffed short stories, epics, rhapsodies, parables and *kammererzaehlungen* of all times and all tongues—and you will never find its like.

The hero in this startling and unprecedented story is a young American who cherishes a virtuous passion for the daughter of a millionaire. The millionaire charts a yacht for a cruise in the South Pacific and takes daughter and lover with him. As diligent students of fiction are well aware, all yachts that sail the South Pacific are eventually wrecked upon desert isles, and this one, of course, is no exception. An off-shore earthquake gobbles it and every soul goes to the sharks save the daughter, her sister and her lover.

Then begins a voyage in a small boat, with the lover as navigator and protector. He is master of all conceivable storms, even in those sardonic seas, and the cannibals of the vicinage alarm him not, but day and night he is torn by a grisly fear that some roving pirate, white, yellow or brown, will swoop down upon him and bear away his two fair charges. Unluckily, his fear is not without ground, for two such filthy Don Juans soon bob up, the one being a Portugee and the other a Chinaman.

Well, it's an exciting story, and more than once the poor girls seem to be on the brink of Gehenna, but after a while salvation comes in sight, for the fair queen of a beauteous isle takes the whole party under her wing. This queen has been to Europe and has added the charm of refined conversation to the lure of her good looks. She is, indeed, a Perfect Lady in every respect save one—and out of that exception grows the unprecedented situation aforesaid. The lover appears before her—and an amber haze, alive with red comets, rises before her eyes. He is

her Ideal Man, and being a queen, she is frank about it. "Enter my polyandrous harem," she says in effect, "or I'll heave your fiancée to the Chinaman!"

Imagine the poor devil's agony! On the one hand a love unspeakable calls him; on the other stands his virtue! He must immolate himself upon the altar of felonious passion—or see his best girl dragged to the pyre! What a situation for the stage! What a chance for some handsome young leading man in creased trousers and patent leather shoes! Before these lines are in type, I have no doubt, the play will be ordered by some alert Frohman. Get busy, Fitch! Go to it, Rose! Up, the Rev. Thomas Dixon, and at 'em!

No; I am not going to tell you how the hero solves his ghastly problem. You must read the book yourself. It is unparalleled, incomparable, magnificent, unique—a literary nonesuch. A hundred delicious touches give it charm. At one place the hero swims ashore and witnesses a fearful dance upon a cannibal island. When he comes back to his boat he is silent, and—"the girls were too well-bred to ask many questions." There is carnage Gargantuan and indescribable. "The death club's final song was that of gushing blood. Then followed a jelly-like gurgling. . . .Not a groan came from the falling pirate. . . .His body gurgled (Gott im Himmel!) as it rolled. . . ."

A large number of incidental paragraphs, explaining the doings of the villains on pathological grounds, give excuse for the suspicion that the author may be identical with the Dr. Med. William Lee Howard, whose marvelous articles occasionally adorn the popular magazines. Who else is so intimate with the secrets of the human soul? Who else could discourse so fluently of that "periodic psychical epilepsy" which makes the Mad Swede use one pirate as a club to pulverize the gurgling carcasses of the others?

In "THE IMMORTAL MOMENT," by May Sinclair (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50) we encounter anew our old friend, the

lady whose past rises up to blast her first chaste love. This lady swam into our ken on February 2, 1852, as Marguerite Gautier and since then she has appeared in a thousand incarnations—as Mrs. Dane, as Iris, as Paula Tanqueray, and as many and many a drama by Adaptor out of Augier and Dumas *filis*. In itself, of course, this antiquity is no demerit, for Juliet Capulet is even older, but when a writer of fiction trots out the familiar figure once more we are at least privileged to expect that some new light be shed upon her sufferings. This new light does not appear in Miss Sinclair's book, for she takes her Mrs. Tanqueray—the name being changed to Mrs. Kitty Tailleure—a quite conventional round.

At the start, Kitty appears heart whole and fancy free—a woman eminent in her profession and not a little soothed by the rewards of her eminence. Then appears her man of fate and the two love. What is she to do? Tell her lover of her past and so risk losing him at once; or marry him without telling and so risk losing him later on, when he finds out for himself? She decides to tell him at once—and he politely makes his *adieux*. And then what? Why, suicide, to be sure! "We found her—down there. She's killed. She—she fell from the cliff."

Miss Sinclair, of course, is no amateur, and in consequence she makes her story interesting, even though it is an old story and she has little novelty to put into it. Her management of the encounters between Kitty and the man in the case is very skilful, and she puts a good deal of vitality into the subsidiary characters. One of these is Kitty's protector—a man of genuine feeling and sound philosophy. But even when this engaging person announces his most interesting syllogisms, one cannot quite put down, for all this surface freshness, a haunting memory of Cayley Drummle.

Mrs. George Cornwallis-West voices an apt criticism of her own book, "THE REMINISCENCES OF LADY RANDOLPH CHURCHILL" (*Century Co.*, \$3.50 net).

when she says, in a prefatory note: "There may be some to whom these reminiscences will be interesting chiefly in virtue of what is left unsaid." What she says is interesting enough, but one puts down the heavy, portentous looking volume at the end with a feeling that the better half of the story remains to be told.

True enough, it would be out of all reason to expect Mrs. Cornwallis-West to reveal State secrets in her book. She is still far from elderly, and has more than a few years ahead of her, and during these years it will be her fate, no doubt, to meet at dinner and masquerade a good many of the royal and noble folk she here discusses. It is a safe bet that she could write a volume about one eminent monarch that would sell better than a best-seller, but all she ventures in the present work is the modest—and truthful—statement that he is a most affable gentleman. Such are the burdens laid upon those who attend at courts. Pepys- and Hohenlohe-like, they must put off the explosion of their bombs until after death has made them deaf to the clatter.

In Robert Hichens's new book, "A SPIRIT IN PRISON" (*Harper's*, \$1.50), the stage setting is of rather more importance than the characters. Given a green and yellow landscape, with the good red sun beating down and the blue sky overhead, and Mr. Hichens is at home. He has, indeed, some measure of that rare genius for description which made the late George W. Stevens, the greatest newspaper reporter that ever lived. And in this tale his chances are many, for the gorgeous bay of Naples is the principal scene.

As for the story itself, it is not of great significance. Hero and heroine are both well past the day of cyclonic passion, and the latter, for a long, long while, gets all of the emotional stimulation she needs out of her lingering, *minore* love for her dead husband. When his unworthiness is revealed to her she is crushed, but in the end a

hint of consolation relieves the gloom. The passages between this melancholy lady's young daughter and a sprightly Neapolitan merman leave the impression that, despite the 662 pages of "A SPIRIT IN PRISON," Mr. Hichens has a great deal more to tell. No doubt we shall have the sequel next year.

As in all English novels which deal with foreign parts, there are innumerable exotic phrases in "A SPIRIT IN PRISON." The ordinary table talk of the characters is done into the vulgate for us, but now and then, particularly when they grow excited or burst into song, the original Italian is given. Mr. Hichens, it must be said to his credit, ameliorates his offense by confining his quotations to Italian phrases which most of us will be able to decipher unaided. When Vere cries "*Stupidol!*" for example, it needs no master of the Romance languages to guess that she is saying "Stupid!" and when, at the end, Zuffino voices a gentle "*Buona notte e buon riposo,*" it is apparent, even to the meanest understanding, that he is wishing Hermione a pleasant evening and peaceful dreams. This device is to be commended to all cosmopolitan novelists. It is simple and humane, and it makes unnecessary the plan resorted to by Mrs. Cornwallis-West in her "Reminiscences," wherein there is printed, as an appendix, a group of translations of the French letters in the text.

Mrs. Edith Wharton's new volume of short stories, "THE HERMIT AND THE WILD WOMAN" (*Scribner's*, \$1.50), is one of those genteel and well-made books which seem to presuppose a high degree of culture and no little personal fastidiousness in the reader. I have read Conrad and Kipling on the deck of a smelly tramp steamer, with my attire confined to a simple suit of pajamas, and somehow, the time, the place and the garb seemed in no wise indecent; but after I had passed the first story in Mrs. Wharton's book, I began to long for a velvet smoking jacket and a genuine Havana substitute for my corn-cob pipe. That is to say,

the main concern of this charming and excellent writer is with the doings and meditations of ultra-civilized folks. The mental processes of an artist losing faith in his work, of a statesman tortured by an indiscreet wife, of a social climber reaching higher and higher—these are the problems in psychology that engage her. Her Hermit and her Wild Woman, true enough, are savages, but after all, they are mere figures of speech, and one feels that she means them to typify far more complex persons. In all the other stories we are frankly above the level of those who sweat and swear. It is not especially fashionable persons that she draws, for she knows well enough that fashionable persons often have elemental minds. A fairly accurate notion of her field may be derived from the thought that her average hero would suffer acutely on hearing a ragged entrance of the wood wind, or on suddenly encountering, by some mischance, a portrait in crayon. Of such are the people of her stories, and it is needless to say that she pictures them with a sure and artistic hand.

Leonidas Andreiyeff, the Russian, in "SILENCE" (*Brown Bros.*, 50 cents) takes us into an entirely different world. Here we have an elemental yearning eating into the soul of an elemental man. Father Ignatius, the priest, wrestles with a staggering problem. It fills his whole mind, and a wild human longing to talk about it—to discuss it, pro and con, hour after hour, day by day—with someone who can understand it, see into it, appreciate its vastness, seizes him. But there is no such person. The brutish peasants 'round about him would merely stand agape. Of the two who might have shouldered some share of his burden one is dead and the other dying. And so Father Ignatius passes out of the story, mute, groping and in agony.

This Andreiyeff, or whatever his name may be—I have seen it spelled in a dozen different ways—is a man who knows the mind of man, and who knows too, how to write. Comparatively few

of his stories have been done into civilized tongues, but these few show a vast and assertive originality. There is something of Poe's *bizarre* in them and a great deal more literary skill than Poe ever had. In the American's writings one is ever conscious of an effort to impress the plain people with sounding rhetoric and the mere hulla-baloo of words; but in Andreiyeff's stories there is apparent only an endeavor to tell a tale—not flamboyantly, but with bitter economy.

Conan Doyle suggests Poe, too, but even more faintly. In his new book "ROUND THE FIRE STORIES" (*McClure*, \$1.50), there are seventeen tales of the marvelous and grotesque. Their personages are entirely incredible, and they are written with little more art than a court report, but the plots are wonders of ingenuity, and so the tales are unmistakably entertaining. One shudders and gasps—and reads on and on and on.

The chief charm of H. G. Wells's new book, "THE WAR IN THE AIR" (*Macmillan*, \$1.50), does not lie in the vivid story of the clash of airships, the destruction of New York and London and the march of the Purple Death from Thibet over the world, but in the picture of civilization in ruins which follows after. The last and greatest of wars has set back the clock of time ten thousand years. The few men that survive become simple shepherds, who pasture their scant flocks in Hyde Park and think only of their belly-need. It is a vast canvas upon which Mr. Wells works, and the picture that he draws is staggering.

Anthony Hope Hawkins tells a novel story in "THE GREAT MISS DRIVER" (*McClure*, \$1.50), and he tells it with skill, but there is little probability that it will change the label he bears in the Hall of Fame. Mr. Hawkins, it is apparent, aspires to a place more exalted than that commonly accorded the writer of mere romance. His intent, in a word, seems to be to prove

he can do better and more serious things than "THE PRISONER OF ZENDA." In this ambition there is a good deal of folly. The stories of the Zenda group were the best of their kind since Dumas, but those in Mr. Hawkins's later manner have no such preëminence. One might name at least a dozen English novelists whose studies of contemporary English manners are far more interesting.

Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's new romance, "THE RED CITY" (*Century Co.*, \$1.50), deals, like "Lewis Rand," with the black days which saw the transformation of the loose American federation into a true republic. The time is the

second administration of Washington, and the clash of hostile parties forms the basis of the action. The Vicomte de Courval, a fugitive from blazing France, and the fair Quakeress he wins and weds in turbulent Philadelphia give the touch of sentiment. "THE RED CITY" introduces us anew to Hugh Wynne, and we see again his friends and hear again their problems. There is nothing of the howl and gallop of conventional romance in this tale. Its tempo is ever *larghetto*, and one acquires, somehow, the notion that Dr. Mitchell's discovery of the therapeutic value of inactivity has made its mark upon the fiction he produces between consultations.

THE LONG ARM OF MANNISTER—

by E. Phillips Oppenheim. (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50)
A workmanlike tale of love and vengeance, by a hardworking and reliable union novelist.

THE LADIES' PAGEANT—

by E. V. Lucas. (*Macmillan*, \$1.50)
A collection of sweet and bitter words about women, in prose and rhyme, chiefly from the more sentimental bards. Not a word from Schopenhauer's immortal essay.

THE ENCHANTED HAT—

by Harold McGrath. (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50)
Four amusing short stories, disguised as a novel.

POCAHONTAS—

by "Tecumtha." (*Universal Pub. Co.*)
A drama in five acts. Back to the sewing circle, Tecumtha! The literary art is not for thee.

MY AUTO BOOK—

by Walter Pulitzer. (*Outing Pub. Co.*, \$1)
A log-book for motorists, with blank spaces for making records of runs. On the odd pages are a hundred or more auto wheezes by Mr. Pulitzer and as many excellent pictures by Hy. S. Watson.

THE BETTER TREASURE—

by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews. (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.25)

An old-fashioned Christmas story, with a hero saved from anarchy and crime by the family clergyman.

THE LETTERS OF JENNIE ALLEN—

by Grace Musgrove. (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.50)

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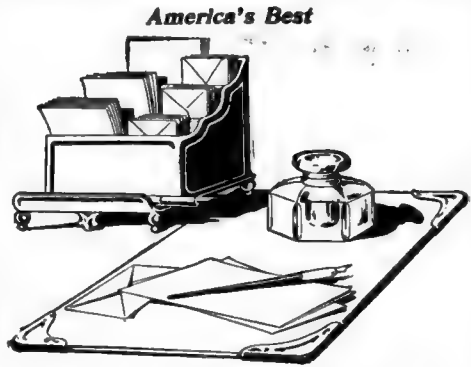
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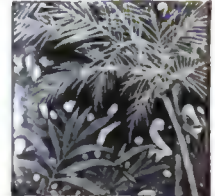
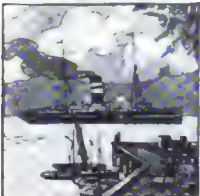
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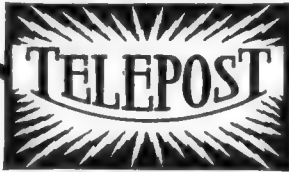
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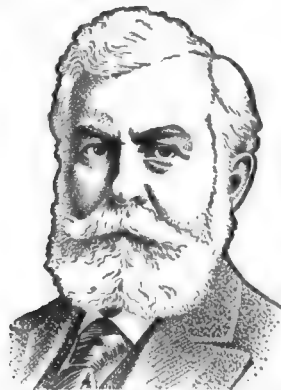
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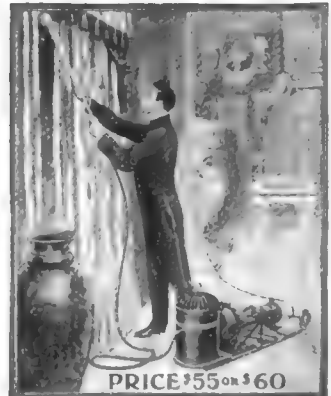
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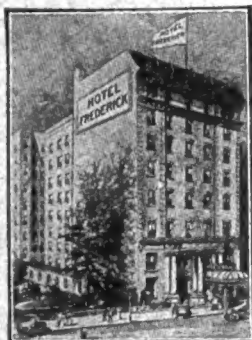
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